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The Week

OVERSHADOWING all other news of the week, including even the perennial question of Franco-German relations, is the domestic crisis with which, as we go to press, the Herriot government is confronted. This crisis is both financial and political. The Herriot group got into power by promising the impossible: namely, to restore French finance without the use of too drastic measures. Today, when the precariousness of the situation can no longer be concealed, it is forced to choose between more inflation—a temporary expedient which in the long run makes matters worse—and a compulsory capital levy which has no chance of passing the Senate. The proposal to raise the needed funds by a voluntary loan at a nominal interest rate is plainly impracticable, a counsel of desperation.

BEHIND this problem lies the whole fight between the Left Bloc and the Nationalists, complicated by the bitter religious quarrel which is the outstanding fact of French politics at present. The Herriot government disapproved, and has tried to sabotage, the resumption of relations with the Vatican; it has sought to bring Alsace and Lorraine, strongly Catholic provinces, under the same secular conditions which exist in the rest of France, a policy which the inhabitants of these restored regions attack as a breach of good faith. Finally, the Herriot government has lost prestige through recent developments in foreign policy. With the rejection of the Geneva Protocol, the initiative has passed from the hands of French diplomats who are left in the embarrassing position of saying Yes or No to proposals which they dislike though they have no alternative to offer.

THE press reports which make it appear that there is an open question whether a capital levy in France is to be adopted or not are not in conformity with the facts. In sober truth the question is decided; there will be a capital levy no matter what the government may do. The owners of French domestic government bonds are receiving interest in a depreciated currency; their securities, when redeemed, are redeemed in a depreciated currency. Most of the security holders have already sacrificed in this way far more than ten percent of their real capital, and thus a capital levy higher than that now discussed has been enforced upon them by French fiscal policy of the past. Investors are waking up to this fact, and, fearful of further depreciation, are demanding cash when their securities mature rather than accepting new bond issues. This enlarges the circulation of bank notes and helps to stimulate more inflation. A capital levy adopted by legislation would merely transfer the inevitable burden to those better able to bear it. For government bonds are held far and wide by petit bourgeois, peasant and worker; their depreciation hits every owner in the same percentage, no matter what his need; but a tax on capital could be graduated and levied where real surplus exists. "Capital levy" has an ugly sound to the conservative, but for France to reject it is to exchange an ugly sound for an uglier thing.

IN a single day last week in three great nations sharp differences of opinion were reported between the head of the government and an important official. In France Premier Herriot disavowed Clementel's policy of inflation; in Italy Mussolini

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attacked as inadequate the army policy of di Giorgio; and in the United States Senator Borah reiterated his emphatic opposition to two policies of President Coolidge, in regard to the World Court and the recognition of Russia, and attacked the government's failure to restore the property of German citizens sequestrated by the Alien Property Custodian.

SENATOR BORAH'S argument against the Permanent Court of International Justice contained nothing new. He is opposed to the creation of a court until after a body of international law has been built up; and also until the nations of the world are "willing to respect treaties and the rights of others." While we agree that both these conditions are desirable, we do not agree that our entering the Court should be postponed until they have been accomplished. On the contrary, America's participation, which would involve, as our readers are well aware, no impairment of American sovereignty, would help to bring about the very conditions Senator Borah demands. The World Court is taken too seriously both by its friends and its foes, who attribute to it powers for good or evil which it is far from possessing. It seems to us perfectly apparent, however, that if we wait for Senator Borah's terms to be met, we may need to wait for generations; and that participation in the Court now, under the Harding-Hughes reservations, will do a great deal to hasten the day for which the Senator from Idaho professes to be so impatient.

ON the question of Russia, as we have repeatedly observed in these pages, we think Senator Borah is wholly correct. He is unalterably opposed to Bolshevism, but he is shrewd enough to recognize that the policy of isolating Russia from contact with the western world—a policy which the Allies once pushed to such disastrous lengths in the cordon sanitaire—both keeps the Soviet government in power and helps to maintain its rigid communist character. We recognize to the full the difficulties in dealing with the Soviet government. We agree that the distinction between its activities and those of the Third Internationale is an academic one without practical validity. We concede that the Moscow administrators, who regard all bourgeois governments as immoral and all bourgeois politicians as dishonest, consider promises made to such governments a good deal less than binding. Yet it still remains true that Russia is one of the most important nations and that, as Senator Borah pointed out, we cannot have peace, disarmament or normal conditions until the problem of relations with her is settled. There is not one of the arguments against recognition which has not been applicable to other governments with whom in the past the United States has clasped hands. The quickest way to demonstrate the unworkability of Communism—if it is unworkable, as appears to be the case—is to take away from the Moscow government its perennial alibi that the hostility of the rest of the world does not give it a fair chance to show what it can do.

WE are equally in agreement with Senator Borah about the matter of America's treatment of property in this country owned by German citizens and taken over by our government during the War. Every international precedent supported the view that such property was not subject to permanent confiscation, which is what our policy of leaving the owners to be reimbursed by the insolvent German government amounts to. Treaties running back, as Senator Borah remarked, as far as 1799, explicitly asserted the inviolability of foreign property; and under these promises German citizens had invested millions of dollars in American enterprises —money which, at the time, we were very glad to see used in the development of this country. In the circumstances, our retention of this property, and our indifference to the fate of its owners, seem inexcusable. We cannot even offer the plea of desperate necessity, which can be advanced by some of the European allies; as the richest nation in a poverty-stricken world, we have no need to play the rôle of bandit. Authorities on international law have repeatedly pointed out what a dangerous precedent we have created in the case of another war. A country which in the last five years has added $3,300,000,000 to its already huge private investments abroad might reasonably be supposed to have some interest in maintaining the doctrine that such investments are not subject to confiscation.

WHEN Senator Butler warns the bankers that manufacturers will not accept a lower tariff, he is dramatizing a new alignment of economic forces which may have important political consequences. Before the War those American financial and business interests depending on foreign trade were puny; bankers and manufacturers rode together on the Republican elephant, flying a high tariff banner. Now that we have become a creditor nation, however, and are confronted at once with a surplus of capital at home and a chance for profitable investment abroad, the lords of finance are being turned away from the lords of protected mills. There is no good investing money unless you can be paid for it. If you invest abroad you must be paid either in gold or in goods. We already have most of the gold in the world—too much, according to the financiers, either for our health or the health of other nations. We must therefore look forward to an increasing stream of incoming goods, or as the protectionists call it, an "unfavorable" balance of trade. Meanwhile the manufacturer for the domestic market will do his utmost to keep these goods out by high duties. With the two lords on his back prodding him to go in opposite directions at the

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same time, will not the elephant trumpet with pain and dismay? And may not the hunted prey, the "ultimate consumer," escape with more of his skin?

WHEN the scandals which marked the Harding administration were still reverberating through the columns of the press, President Coolidge promised in a public statement that every guilty man would be brought to justice. A survey of the situation a year later shows that whether the mills of the gods grind small or not their pace is extremely slow. Testimony has only now been completed in the government's suit to cancel the Teapot Dome leases; and the judge's decision may be expected some time in May. Colonel Charles R. Forbes of the Veterans' Bureau, having been convicted by a Chicago court, has appealed his case; but further proceedings will be long delayed because of his present serious illness. Several of the principals in the prize fight film episode, involving the illegal transportation of Dempsey-Carpentier pictures across state lines, have been found guilty and subjected to fines which for most of them are no punishment at all. Gaston B. Means, at one time special agent for Attorney-General Daugherty and later an important witness for the Brookhart-Wheeler committee, was recently found guilty in New York on a conspiracy charge, fined $10,000 and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary. He has just been indicted again by a Washington Federal Grand Jury on a forgery charge which alleges that he signed Senator Brookhart's name to the spurious order requiring that he give up all his records—an order which he claimed was responsible for their disappearance.

MEANWHILE, Chief Justice McCoy of the District of Columbia Court, has quashed the indictments in the bribery and conspiracy cases involving Secretary Fall, Harry Sinclair and the Dohenys, father and son. This was done on technical grounds because an assistant attorney-general was present when the case was presented before the special Grand Jury. The government will appeal, however, and hopes to push the cases through successfully. Perhaps most interesting of all the items in this general category is the news that Harry M. Daugherty, who refused to take the witness stand in his own defense and in fact resisted the investigations of his affairs by every means at his command, is about to sponsor a book which is designed to show his complete innocence and the unfathomable wickedness of his detractors.

PROF. WILLIAM E. DODD pointed out in the pages of the New Republic some time ago the extraordinary difference between the public response to the scandals of the Harding administration and those of Grant's time. The latter were much less serious and widespread than was the corruption of the Ohio Gang and its allies; but the conduct of Boutwell and Babcock was received with nation-wide indignation. The leading papers of the country, regardless of party affiliation, denounced the corruptionists in the strongest terms. Everyone knows that this was not the case in 1924. While there were honorable exceptions, most of the leading Republican politicians and newspapers failed to aid the fight for honesty as their predecessors did not fail fifty years ago. Editorial after editorial, speech after speech, assailed the methods of the senatorial investigators and ignored the indisputable corruption they were exposing.

THE tacit conspiracy was successful; the lessons which should have been drawn from the nation's humiliating experience never have been drawn. The country has not really cleaned house. We have moved from an atmosphere of bribery and cheap political graft to one of an extraordinarily close identification between large business interests and the executive branch of the government—an association which finds its reflection in a program designed in the frankest possible way to meet the purposes of these interests. Needless to say, we are not implying any actual impropriety in the relationship. It is a natural one, dictated largely by temperamental affiliation. Nevertheless, it remains true that Washington and Wall Street are working more directly and openly in accord with one another than has ever been the case before; that in any previous era this sort of affiliation would have resulted in a country-wide storm of indignation which would have forced an immediate and marked alteration of policy; and that today it does no such thing. The connection between this fact and the attitude toward the Harding scandals seems to us clear.

THE State of Minnesota is one where the unreality of the division now existing between the Republican and Democratic parties has long been recognized. Our readers will remember that the Farmer-Labor party of that state elected both the senators in the last Congress, Mr. Shipstead by a plurality of 83,000 and Mr. Johnson by one of 94,000. In the election last year 41 percent of the state's total vote was cast for La Follette, a proportion exceeded only by North Dakota and Wisconsin. The Minnesota progressive movement has been hampered by the presence of some extreme radicals, a fact which lent plausibility to the unjustified charge that the movement in general was of a revolutionary character.

ONE need not cherish any illusions as to the immediate prospects of a third party enterprise to welcome the news that steps have recently been taken in Minnesota to reëstablish the progressive movement there with all radicals left out. A conference was held in St. Paul late in March at which the Farmer-Labor Federation was reorganized as the Farmer-Labor Association. The delegates to this meeting were elected at popular con-

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ventions in all counties. Despite some expectations that this procedure would result in a gathering of well-meaning, unattached progressives of the Roosevelt ian 1912 type, the conference was almost entirely composed of farmers' and trade union representatives. Membership in the new organization itself, however, is open to any individual or group upon acceptance of the purpose, principles and program of the party. Its major doctrine is an analysis of the present situation as one in which the government is controlled, and our basic economic activities are monopolized, by great special interests. It demands that government be restored to the people through organized political action and the public ownership and operation of all private monopolies. If it must be said that Minnesota should have cleaned house in this fashion long ago, one must add that she has now done so in a vigorous and effective manner and with results which may have an important bearing on future political history.

THE case of psychoanalysis illustrates very neatly the devious course of innovation. About ten years ago psychoanalysis became the universal rage. Before that time it was known only to a few students and practiced only by a handful of pioneering psychopathologists. With the onset of the epidemic everyone became a psychoanalyst either as a patient or as an amateur, professional, or semi-professional practitioner. The inevitable result was a great deal of nonsense, a certain amount of fraud, but also a very great increase in the legitimate study and practice of psychoanalysis in one form or another by regularly trained psychiatrists. Such an inflation was bound to be followed by deflation, not to say panic. The present debasement of psychoanalytic currency, the general air of deprecation with which the Freudian coinages are passed from hand to hand, is the natural reaction, the expected downward curve of public interest. Whether complete repudiation is to follow will depend on the credit of the genuine psychoanalysts.

THE psychoanalysts know this. They have presumably discounted the deflation in advance. Such an attack on psychoanalytic quackery as was recently delivered in New York by the Rev. Charles Francis Potter, a Unitarian minister, and endorsed by the New York World, finds ready acceptance by Dr. A. A. Brill, the president of the New York Psychoanalytic Society and probably the leading American psychoanalyst. Mr. Potter demands a public investigation of pseudo-analysis and, for the future, regulation by a licensing board. This, says Doctor Brill, is what leading psychoanalysts have wanted from the first. "Psychoanalysis," says he, "is one of the most difficult branches of psychotherapy. . . . It requires sound medical training in all branches. . . especially in neurology and psychiatry. . . . The interests of the community should be most zealously guarded." The fact is that the regulation which scientists have always wished has been impossible until psychoanalysis should first have received a general recognition and then have come under general suspicion. These stages having passed, it remains for the regulations to be applied, and for Doctor Brill and his colleagues to demonstrate what the real truth and value of psychoanalysis are.

WHETHER the truth about spirit phenomena can ever be established by the offering of $5000 rewards is doubtful. These cases always result in hung juries with dissatisfaction on both sides. If the most recent offer, by the Journal of Abnormal Psychology, of which Dr. Morton Prince is editor, has any value it lies in the conditions rather than the challenge. To meet the conditions of this offer the spirit, or other, demonstrations must be made in a laboratory administered and regulated by the editors of the journal, and under ordinary laboratory conditions, including ordinary light. The last stipulation will, of course, raise a cry from all believers in psychical manifestations. White light, they will say, is fatal not merely to fraud but to genuine spirit phenomena, just as it is fatal to a photographic plate. What is really needed for the final clearing up of all these matters is extended investigation, in a laboratory, to ascertain what happens in the dark that does not happen in the light and why—to ascertain, that is, what everyone knows about the photographic plate. The psychical researchers have yet to learn, apparently, that negative results are just as important for science as positive. This truth, at least, will be brought out by the offer of the Journal of Abnormal Psychology.

IN matters educational, no less than in their economics and their politics, the forty-eight state legislatures agree to disagree. Tennessee has imposed upon the public schools of the state the opinion of the fundamentalists about creation. The Oregon school law, now before the Supreme Court of the United States, took the action desired by the Ku Klux Klan against parochial and incidentally all other private schools. Meanwhile Kansas has taken education out of politics by vesting the control of the state's schools in a non-paid board of regents who hold office for definite terms and are removable only for cause. This provision, which has been found to work excellently in various other states, is the last act in the drama in which former Governor Davis played the villain and Chancellor Lindley, of the state university, the hair-breadth hero, rescued from certain death only by the timely election of Governor Paulen on a platform which included "taking the schools out of politics." Two days before Davis relinquished office the state supreme court ruled that he was within his powers in removing the Chancellor without notice and without cause. After his inauguration Governor Paulen immediately restored the Chancellor and urged the passage of the bill which is now law.

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Assessing War Cost in France —and Elsewhere

THE new political and economic crisis in France has not at this writing crystallized sufficiently to justify an interpretation of its probable political consequences. But its more remote social significance looks abundantly clear. It is the beginning of a prolonged struggle among the several French economic classes over the share which each of them is to pay of the costs of the War. The French business men are hoping to impose the larger part of the burden on the working classes and the rentiers by continuing and increasing the process of inflation. The working classes hope to impose it on capital in general, both fixed and fluid, by a property levy. The rentiers have put forward no particular plan. They are the most numerous and they should be the most powerful class in France. A moderate capital levy followed up by rigid economy would probably cure the financial malady of their country with smaller loss to themselves than any other possible plan; but they will have none of it. They are timid, short-sighted and suspicious. They prefer to expose their funds to the danger of almost utter destruction by inflation rather than submit to the pain of a surgical operation on their little fortunes without the comfort of an anæsthetic.

It looks, consequently, as if the rentier would join with the business man in proposing or permitting further inflation in order to avoid being deprived of any part of his recent capital gains. People who control businesses and sell products suffer less from inflation than do either wage-earners or passive investors. They do not like the process, but they will put up with it, if necessary, in order to avoid the interference with their affairs and the social coercion which a capital levy involves. Among the leading activities in a modern society, that of the business man is much the most vital. Society cannot dispense with his services; and governments rather than displease him are obliged to refrain from taking those decisions to which he is wholly opposed. In France finance and big business are opposed to a capital levy, and they will probably succeed in their opposition. Since the War they have emerged in all modern industrial societies as the most capable, the most powerful and the most indispensable economic group in the community.

Hitherto the struggle among the several economic classes in France over the distribution of the cost of the War has for many reasons been postponed and obscured. In the beginning Frenchmen of all classes hoped to shift a large part of the burden either upon their former enemies or upon their former allies. As long as they could deceive themselves with hopes of this kind, there was no sufficient reason for undergoing a domestic conflict. They had a common interest in seeing how far they could pass the cost on to other peoples. Moreover, while France had suffered more severely from the devastations of war than any of the combatants, she had during and immediately after the fighting reaped considerable temporary economic advantages from her very misfortunes. Her Allies spent enormous sums of money in France, and so contributed to a fugitive appearance of prosperity. When these expenditures ceased the French government itself poured out money lavishly on reconstruction. The borrowing and spending of these milliards not only enriched many individual Frenchmen but prevented the tide of apparent prosperity from ebbing. The emotional tension of the War itself, and the gratification of final victory had rendered the French people enthusiastically patriotic and uneasily self-confident. They subscribed freely to government securities, the proceeds of which were spent by Frenchmen for rebuilding devastated France; and as long as they subscribed freely their politicians did not propose to annoy their public by raising any question as to the payment of these obligations—except in its relation to the collection of an indemnity from Germany. During these years of fictitious prosperity the price of the franc was sagging, but help from abroad and the patriotism of the French people prevented it from collapsing. A combination of fortunate circumstances enabled them to evade the ultimate problem of how to distribute among French groups the vast burdens which the nation had assumed as the result of war and of reconstruction.

Recently, however, the strain of carrying this burden of debt in its present fluid form has become intolerable. The difficulty of renewing the huge floating debt as it expires steadily increases. It is not less difficult to find the currency with which to transact a necessarily expanding volume of business at a higher price level. What can the government do? Shall it continue the process of inflation by issuing francs in order to take up expiring short-term securities? Or shall it ease the burden of the debt by instituting a capital levy? The Herriot Cabinet has backed and filled and shifted from one alternative to the other and no wonder it hesitates. Neither expedient can be carried out without running into grievous difficulties. While the capital levy appears to be the only honest and sufficient method of reducing the national financial burden to a tolerable figure, it is extremely repugnant to business, technically difficult and would probably result in the export of capital. The Herriot government does not look strong and united enough to see the proposal through.

Probably no government which is politically possible in France will possess sufficient strength and the wisdom to steer a course which will avoid a financial collapse. French cabinets are notoriously weak in dealing with controverted and puzzling domestic problems, and at present the difficulty of

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knowing what to do is quite as great as the difficulty of gathering together the strength with which to do it. At least a partial collapse will probably have to occur. It is the only way to reconcile Frenchmen to the sacrifices of income which are necessary to restore the economic credit of the whole nation. The business men will suffer from this collapse, but they will suffer less than the wage-earners, and the wage-earners will suffer less than the small passive property-owners. In any event the social consequences of the collapse will be serious. The French Republic is the creature of the small property-owners, including the peasant proprietors, and if the capital value of their holdings is much further impaired, they may well become disgruntled and threaten the security of the Republic. What form their discontent will take is, of course, a matter of speculation, but we may without excessive presumption venture upon one prophecy. A France in which the class of small property-owners or rentiers has suffered a partial economic eclipse will have lost its balance, and is likely to lurch in the direction either of socialist or capitalist Fascism.

A struggle analogous to that which is taking place in France has occurred and is occuring in Russia, Germany, Italy, Great Britain and the United States. In Russia the bureaucratic, capitalist organization broke down during the progress of the War, and Socialist fanatics seized and have exercised the whole power of the state in the name of the workers. They have attempted to assess the economic cost of the War exclusively on the former ruling classes. They have succeeded in wiping out the old Russian economy and polity, but they have not succeeded in building up a communist state which can dispense with the services of the business man. In Germany the struggles and financial confusions of the last few years have practically exterminated the class which lived wholly or partly on interest. The only economic groups which count in Germany are groups of active producers such as business men, farmers who own their own land and wage-earners, and the wage-earners seem to occupy the weakest position of the three. If the country were free from foreign coercion, it would probably become like Italy, the beneficiary or the victim of a business man's dictatorship—the business men being assisted by the technical experts and in general by the professional men and the intellectuals. Such a dictatorship is a lopsided and unstable form of political and social organization, but it at least has the advantage of vesting the political power in productive economic groups, who are actually carrying on the essential functional activities of the community.

Of all the great European countries which suffered heavy losses in the War, Great Britain has distributed the burden most equitably, and has succeeded best in maintaining a class equilibrium. That part of the gentry and the aristocracy which lived on unearned incomes and occupied their time with politics, social diversion and sport has, to be sure, lost a certain part of its wealth and power. British Conservative governments will be composed in the future to a greater extent than in the past of business men. Big business and its financial ally have increased their power in England just as they have on the Continent. But the gentry and the aristocracy still retain no little wealth and prestige, and the wage-earners, in spite of unemployment and an impairment of the wage level, are for the first time organizing and educating themselves to participate in the government of the country. Moreover British business men have, in spite of their increase in power, shouldered a larger share of the national burdens than have the corresponding class in any other country. Judging from the past Great Britain will probably continue to distribute the burden with a rough equity, as equity is understood in a capitalist economic system. She is in less danger than any other European country of being obliged to protect social order by setting up some form of class dictatorship.

In our own country business is proceeding much more confidently than in England to pass on to other economic groups the remaining costs of the War. Hitherto the farmers have contributed most heavily, and the wage-earners, apart from a period of depression in 1921, have not had much reason in this respect for complaint. Until 1920 wealth and business, while they profited largely also paid heavily, but immediately thereafter they started to reduce their burdens. They began by exterminating the excess profits tax and then insisted on the reduction of the super income taxes. During the next session of Congress, they will in all probability succeed in drastically cutting the highest income tax percentage to twenty-five or less and perhaps in doing away with the federal inheritance tax. It is their day.

Of all the political changes of the last ten years the increased class consciousness and popular prestige of American big business and finance is the most conspicuous and the most momentous. In 1914 big business was discredited and suspected, and the tide in politics was running against its interests. Today the captain of industry and finance is restored to a position of authority similar to that which he enjoyed during the administration of McKinley. He possesses in the press of the country and in the two-party system two instruments for guiding public policy and opinion which are in the main subservient to his interests, and on the strength of his improved standing he is about to start on a renewed career of business consolidation which, so far as it is successful, will further increase his economic power and his ability to make profits. He constitutes the most prosperous, the most self-confident and the ablest economic group which exists anywhere in the world today. So far from having suffered any setback since 1914, he has, as a result of the calami-

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ties and the convulsions of the last ten years, succeeded in reducing European business to a semi-tributary situation with respect to American finance and in teaching the hitherto insubordinate American democracy not to damage his interests or to thwart his will.

The Education of Jack Horner

WHAT knowledge is of the most worth is a question which cannot be answered definitively. Each generation, or at least each turn in the current of civilization, requires us to take our educational bearings afresh. Spencer knew this well enough. His famous essay which bore this question as its title was written at that time, sixty odd years ago, when schools that were steering a classical course were being carried far to leeward by the torrent of science across their bows. That torrent has by no means spent itself. Yet today scholars are anxiously taking their bearings once more as though they had been sailing by dead reckoning for many years and felt they would be lost if they did not very soon plot a certain course.

Professor Erskine is one of these. By no means hostile to science, he is nevertheless not a scientist nor, like Spencer, a protagonist of the educational value of scientific studies. Rather he advocates a qualified return to the course the schools were following before their recent diversion. Education has always been pretty much a coast-wise journey, steered from headland to headland of such classics as have been the possession of any given race or generation. Inevitably so. Lacking a skipper of the rare genius of a Columbus or a Magellan the ordinary crew must peep about, studying the familiar and accustomed lore, hopping from classic to classic, from promontory to promontory, never letting go one until the next grateful landmark is in sight. Professor Erskine's plan has the authority of all civilization behind it. What was probably the most stable and long-lived system of education in the history of human civilization, the educational practice of the Chinese down to the end of the Manchu dynasty, was the complete embodiment of Professor Erskine's theory. That system was simply the study of the great Chinese classics and nothing else. No time was lost on secondary works or irrelevant biographia, and the list never varied. For some centuries access to the higher ranks of public men was only through a competitive examination of a strictly textual nature. Never have scholars been so completely "liberated from the luggage of contemporary things." Yet this system was followed by a revolution, and, we are told, a New China.

No doubt there is a sense in which all education is simply the inculcation in one form or another of what has gone before. So the anthropologist would view it. Only by the indoctrination of each new generation with the traditions of the past can cultures maintain themselves. The educational methods of the past, according to this rule, are summed up in the present civilization. Yesterday's schools are good or bad relatively to one's opinion of the civilization of today. Contemplating the centuries through which the lines of Homer have been repeated, and never more widely than today, we can think very well both of ourselves and of our schoolmasters; looking about in vain for the epics of contemporary Homers we may perhaps raise the awful question if our education has been a system to prevent the repetition of satisfactory achievement.

In short, the strength of the classical system is the strength of inertia; its weakness a deficiency of philosophy. It is all very well to retain the past. But the philosophy of endless and aimless repetition seems to be compounded not of greatness but of mediocrity. That philosophy makes two assumptions: on the nature of greatness, and the authenticity of its occurence. The one is a mystery, the other a revelation. The confinement of our interest to the miracle men of history, our neglect of minor figures and contempt for the casual, the ordinary and the unpicturesque, for background and milieu, means but one thing: it means that we regard genius as an irruption, the capricious and arbitrary manifestation of some ungovernable Providence to which the plodding continuity of the common run is contemptibly irrelevant. On its surface this opinion seems to hold mediocrity in low esteem, but its effect is the precise opposite of its appearance. Back of the mystery of genius is the transparency of commonness. The more mysterious greatness is, the more explicable and natural vulgarity becomes. As the old pander cheerily agrees, in Mrs. Warren's Profession, divinity is some power not ourselves. Nothing is more comforting than the doctrine that to honor the saints is the whole duty of man. Greatness to the great; to the small, meanness sanctified by piety.

The effect of this ancestor worship is heightened by a revealed genealogy. The titans of history are not discovered and acknowledged. They are established, timeless, immortal, and therefore without beginnings. They come to us upon the authority of tradition which to investigate is heresy. It is enough that we are endowed with their abiding spirit. All of which means, of course, that the miracles have ceased, that genius is by definition a phenomenon of past time, that the only deadly sin is to applaud contemporary efforts. Since only that is great which bears the stamp of posterity we must conceal our trivial talents from our posterity. A counsel of humility is this? Or is it the ingenuous confession to each other that our race is already sufficiently distinguished?

Whatever the merits of classical study, its philosophy seems invariably to defeat the fundamental aim of education. If this analysis is sound, classicism so emphasizes the objects of its interest that

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it sacrifices understanding for acquaintance. Yet apart from professional training understanding is the one intelligible aim of education, wherever education has an aim. That, of course, is by no means everywhere. The passage of cultural tradition by the repetition of generation after generation is an aimless natural process, almost a metabolism or a geological deposit. But where men create schools and seek to know and to teach that knowledge which is of the most worth, their object, and their sole object, is the understanding and control of human life and its exterior conditions. The significance of the classics, in any philosophy founded upon the realities of education, is their accumulated wisdom, the light they throw upon the life of man as it always is and as it was at the various junctures represented by those classics. Eternal recollection, unless it is the recollection of something human, something significant for man, something which illuminates contemporary life, is mere academic babbling. For the understanding of human civilization Troy is no doubt significant. It is for us the potent symbol of a great civilization that has passed away but not without endowing us with a permanent Hellenic strain. But the understanding of the significance of the symbol is possible only for those who know a literary symbol from an urban reality. What can they know of Homer who only Homer know? Troy is the most notable city of Asia Minor for exactly the same reason that Hamlet is the most notable prince of Denmark. Whereas, by contrast, Troy, New York, is characterized by an actuality which neither of these possesses and a certain different significance as the manufacturing centre of an article, the linen collar, which has often been cited as the supreme symbol of bourgeois civilization, and if anyone intends to understand human civilization as he finds it in the resounding hexameters of a mythical Greek poet it will not do him a bit of harm to reflect on Troy, New York.

In such an educational philosophy no dogmas can suffice for content. Whatever facilitates investigation, whatever supplies insight, whatever provokes curiosity, must have its place on the curriculum. Generally speaking, contemporary studies are likely to prevail because the present is of all ages the most interesting and the most baffling and the most profusely available. But for the better arrangement of the contemporary chaos every student will use such of the resources of the past as seem most potent. Each must be free to stake his claims where he sees the glint of gold. That, if etymology means anything, is the bearing of the word liberal. Indeed, what freedom there can be in the recital of a predetermined calendar of saints we are quite unable to imagine. Professor Erskine gives us to understand that Hobbes is to be required for graduation, yet the canonical robes sit all awry on Hobbes's shrugging shoulders. As a writer he contributed few pages to the golden book of the world's greatest literature. His style was distinguished not so much by grace or eloquence as by a certain crabbed forcefulness well suited to his eminently disputatious mind. He is a leading figure neither in science, in which his career centred chiefly in his obstinate attempt to maintain his squaring of the circle against the truth as laid down by the best mathematicians of the day, nor in philosophy, which has never allowed him the credit for being the first behaviorist because of the extreme sketchiness of his theories. In theology and politics he was dangerously subversive, and that, reinforced by a savage wit, gained him a great reputation about the court of Charles II as a picturesque and crotchety old man. But Professor Erskine rules out the personal. Certainly Hobbes was no classicist: one of his best sallies was to the effect that if he read as much as other men he would know no more than they. Nevertheless, and this is the core of educational liberalism, there he stands. If any find illumination by his light, by all means let them post a sign for other travellers.

Professor Erskine has defined the liberal college by its insistence on the "very few golden accomplishments of the race." This seems to us not liberalism but the rankest dogmatism. Whatever the dictionaries may say we take it that the phrase "liberal college" has received its connotation from recent educational discussion. That discussion has turned upon the function of the undergraduate college, devoted to general studies preparatory to specialization, in contrast to the professional work of the various graduate departments. The problem of the college is the general problem of all education brought here to its consummatory stage and defined as an end and not a means. It is the problem of understanding. In their attack upon the universal problem colleges are hampered by various dogmas ruling content and technique. Some of these are merely old curricula petrified into rock-ribbed traditions. Others have arisen more recently to express the extraneous demands of "specialization" upon the educator's time. The liberals, as everyone is aware, have been attacking these dogmas. It seems to us that they have made it quite clear that a liberal education is the pursuit of understanding unhampered by preconceived ideas, hallowed though they be by generations of professors, and unhurried by the importunities of law and medicine and business. This sounds like sequestration, and in a certain sense it is. Understanding comes to a man more readily in a cloister than in a market-place. But even in a cloister men may give their minds to the contemplation of esoteric things, or they can take advantage of their perspective to understand the market-place. If the prevailing ambition of teachers and students is to understand contemporary life, that is not because anyone conceives the present to be more noble than other ages, but because human life and civilization exist as actualities only in the present.

Professor Erskine speaks for "whatever makes

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us at home with the great of all time." Only one thing can do that: an understanding of our own times comparable with their mastery of theirs. Nothing but greatness qualifies one to associate with greatness. Lacking that, one can do no more than offer a patronizing hospitality. The classical college is at home to genius.

Railroad Consolidation

WHEN the period of federal control of railroads was nearing its end, the chief endeavor of railroad interests, business men and their representatives was to avoid government ownership. Propaganda was unleashed, but it was realized that propaganda was not enough. Something must be done to remedy the flaws in the private railway structure which would, if left alone, counteract even the most skilful propaganda.

Private management, unequal to the tasks of transportation in 1917, had broken down, and public management had succeeded in using the same machine to carry the heaviest burden ever put on the railroads. The operating economies and simplifications arising out of treating the railway network as a single system for public service were at the time obvious to everyone concerned—though this may be difficult to remember in the face of the enormous body of contrary opinion since spread about from interested circles. The contrast between the unified method of operation and the method to which the country had been familiar under private management was so striking that it was universally felt that if the roads were to be thrown back to their several managements, certain radical reforms would have to be undertaken in order that private ownership might be preserved.

On the operating side, it was desired to nail down the advance made in eliminating wastes. The public needs routing of freight by the shortest or cheapest way; competing systems shift it according to the strongest bargaining power. The public needs joint use of terminals according to requirements; private systems keep them for competitive advantage. The best deployment of rolling stock requires joint use of yards, engine houses, locomotives, cars; private systems go only so far in this direction as they must, for fear one road will sponge on another. There are all kinds of chances for simplification and standardization of equipment, of accounting. Competitive salesmanship and commercial practices would gain from pruning. And the people need a future development of producing regions and trade gateways according to the logic of commercial geography, not according to the pull of certain private investors in railways, real estate or shipping.

Perhaps even more important to the framers of the Transportation Act were the financial problems caused by the simultaneous existence of strong and weak roads. Some systems are profitable, others decidedly not. Most of the unprofitable roads cannot, like the unprofitable firms in a manufacturing industry, be allowed to pass out of operation—they are necessary to the communities they serve. And the marginal roads cannot, like marginal factories which just manage to keep in existence, be allowed to shut down or start up according to the state of trade. Railroads must be continually operated, they should at all times have the equipment and the forces to offer good service, they should have the funds for necessary expansion. At the same time, rates and wages must be broadly standardized; this would be true whether they were regulated or not. And in the long run rates must be high enough and wages low enough to give even the weakest roads sufficient earnings to maintain good service and attract new investment. That furnishes far more than sufficient earnings to the strong. Thus competitive private ownership carries grave disadvantages to the public and to railroad labor, if indeed the economic limits of rates and wages are not such as to cause poor service under such conditions.

Consolidation was a major part of the remedy which the Transportation Act provided for these operating and financial defects. It was expected to furnish at the same time a method of furthering economy in operation and a method of pooling earnings, so that the weak roads could be sustained by the strong. It would simplify the whole task of regulation and make governmental ownership unnecessary.

The law specified that:

1. The Interstate Commerce Commission should adopt a plan for consolidation into a limited number of systems;

2. In this plan competition among systems should be preserved as far as possible and existing channels of trade should be maintained wherever practicable;

3. The systems should be so arranged with regard to costs of transportation and values of their properties that uniform service rates would produce substantially the same rates of earnings on the several systems;

4. When such a plan had been tentatively announced, hearings should be held, and a final plan adopted—subject to future modifications;

5. Regardless of all anti-trust laws, railway consolidation should be permitted if judged by the commission to be in harmony with the plan, provided that

6. The total par value of the securities of the consolidated system should not exceed the value of the several properties as determined by the commission.

Under the direction of Prof. William Z. Ripley a plan was carefully formulated, and later tentatively adopted by the commission, with some modifications. Then the fun began. Almost every interest concerned objected to the specific plan, the

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objectors objected to each other's plans, and outside critics to any specific resolution of the objections. Competing roads strove for still greater competitive advantage. Strong roads objected to taking over weak sisters. Weak roads wanted to be taken over by still stronger ones than the plan provided. Profitable small roads objected to being merged with less profitable but controlling interests. Localities objected to giving up advantageous positions.

In cases where the plan sacrificed competition to larger ends, representatives of the public strove to perpetuate competition. It was objected that existing channels of trade would be changed, it was objected that the plan did not provide sufficient unification of terminals, it was objected that weak roads, instead of being combined with strong ones, would be combined with each other. It was objected that the plan had been developed contrary to law, without detailed study of costs on the various lines, and that its financial estimates were meaningless because valuations of the several roads had not been completed. It was finally objected that any possible cost estimates and valuations would be illusory because of the unpredictable redistribution of traffic and earnings which the adoption of the plan would bring about.

Opponents of ordered change in the public interest won a strategic victory by placing the burden of proof upon a specific, unrealized plan. If the same intensity of criticism had been directed against the existing competitive situation, its prestige would have been wiped off the map. But the upshot is, practically, that any attitude taken by railroad interests has the right of way over any comprehensive plan in the public interest. The commission, seeing the hopelessness of producing a generally satisfactory plan—and general satisfaction is necessary to call forth voluntary consolidation under a general plan—has failed to confirm the tentative or any other scheme. There is a possibility that Congress will relieve it of the necessity of formulating one.

Meanwhile railroad interests have been busy at their own consolidation projects. Some of these are in fairly close harmony with the aims of the Transportation Act, but most of them violate not only the commission's tentative plan but the purposes underlying it. Take, for instance, the Van Sweringen Nickel Plate merger. According to the commission plan, the Nickel Plate was to have been combined with the Lehigh Valley and shorter lines. Instead of this, it is now proposed to combine it with the Erie, which was to have been the main stem of a competing trunk-line system, with the Chesapeake and Ohio and the Hocking Valley, which were to have formed a regional grouping with the Virginian —this road uses the Chesapeake and Ohio as a western outlet—and with the Père Marquette, which was to have been part of still a fourth system in Michigan.

The difficulty of voluntary mergers is illustrated in this case by the legal fight of minority stockholders of the Chesapeake and Ohio to prevent an absorption of their property by less profitable lines which would drain off part of their profit. And such mergers, if agreed upon by all private interests concerned and presented to the commission as virtually accomplished facts, will be hard for the commission to disapprove no matter to what extent they ignore the need of weak roads, the maintenance of competition or the best service to the public.

There is a movement, favored by Senator Cummins, to adhere to the idea of a comprehensive plan, and to move in the direction of compulsory consolidation in case voluntary consolidation does not take place in accordance with the plan. But compulsory consolidation might be adjudged unconstitutional; at any rate it offers the prospect of interminable legal battles both over its constitutionality and over the specific values of specific properties in the hands of unwilling owners. And there is little likelihood of the adoption of compulsory consolidation by Congress.

The chances are that the inevitable tendency toward railroad combination will take its "natural" course—that is, the course mapped out by vigorous private capitalists—and that the result will be to emphasize most of the defects of private operation. The power of large systems will be increased by the diminution of competition, while the weak lines will be left to their fate, determining by their very existence a wide margin of profit for the big fellows. In such a situation most of the benefits of any operating economies achieved will be absorbed by the owners of the profitable systems. This is, of course, exactly what the large railroad interests would like. It amounts virtually to the situation of an industry whose prices are not regulated at all. The fear of government ownership has been softened by time.

It must be noted, too, that even the best plan of consolidation could not proceed until the task of valuation had been finished, and that the public would benefit little from it financially if the valuations of the weak roads were too high. Every railroad problem in the end touches valuation. Concerning this we shall have something further to say.

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The Liberal College

WE like this word "liberal." Twenty years ago, there were two kinds of colleges—good ones and bad ones. Now, it seems, every college is good, and some of them are liberal. We observe that our own college, whichever it may be, is always of the liberal kind. The epithet would not be found so often on our lips if it didn't bring a rich flavor of satisfaction. Perhaps we taste in it the thankfulness of the righteous person who walked near the altar, that our college is not as other colleges. Perhaps to call our own college liberal is to satisfy an aspiration for it—an aspiration perhaps not entirely satisfied in any other way. But we like the word, and we use it so much that we have become interested to know what it means.

The Oxford dictionary says that "liberal" means "fit for a gentleman"—adding that the use is now rare. Webster's dictionary says that the word means "befitting a man of free birth." The liberal arts in the ancient world fitted the freeman to live rather than to make a living. "Liberal" also means "without restraint; not strict or rigorous; free, as a translation." There are those who say that the college graduate's knowledge of the world, and of man in the world, is "free, as a translation." But the scholar, with all his faults, often knows not to expect the wrong things of education. His studies may have rescued him from that faith in the certainty of human knowledge which it is the misfortune of the uneducated to embrace. For him the liberal element in a college course is that which frees us from slavery to our environment, from slavery to our business or profession, from slavery to the dead things of the past, or to the insignificant things of the present. It is whatever makes us at home, spiritually at ease, with the great of all time.

If the definition is so clear in the dictionary and in the heart of the wiser scholars, why should we be at pains to tell each other what we mean when we speak of the liberal college? Because, in the first place, all colleges like to be called liberal, and those are most eager for the title which feel the encroachment of the professional or technical point of view upon the older humanities. One may study the calculus for a purely humane purpose, to increase one's store of knowledge and range of ideas; or one may study it in order to be an engineer. The difference in purpose was originally simple enough. But the student of engineering now insists that the profession he prepares for is itself one of the larger humanities, to enter which is a liberal education; by a natural increase of faith in their useful calling the engineers are coming to think of their schools as liberal institutions, though as yet they do not often claim the name, and the old-fashioned college which has added to its curriculum a course or two leading to later professional study, soon learns to argue that the innovation does not take away the old liberalism, but really strengthens it.

I should not like to seem hostile to courses in engineering, or to other technical courses in our institutions of public education. Personally I should like to see every citizen, of whatever age, finding the instruction or the aid he desires in the nearest university. If he wishes to be an engineer or a painter or a blacksmith, I should like to see him turn to the university for training. No doubt, as our American universities learn to serve the community with more and more completeness we shall become accustomed to think of carpentering and of plumbing as academic subjects. How long is it since the universities had a welcome for the dentist, the pharmacist, the surgeon or the engineer? Let us hope that the engineer trained in the university, in the neighborhood of the liberal college, is broader and more generous-minded than if he had studied engineering in a technical school, without the humane environment which opens his eyes to the social, non-professional aspects of his work. But how shall we secure the humane environment?

The second reason why we find it hard nowadays to define the liberal college, is the very opposite of the first. If there is a tendency to introduce professional or technical courses into many of the colleges, it should be remembered also that many colleges have stood firm against such invasion, and beyond the shadow of question they teach nothing which would help man or woman to earn a living. By part of the definition they are liberal colleges. Having taken one good look at them, however, the prudent scholar declines to accept them as the illustration of his ideal. To be liberal, education must not only be free from that kind of slavery which comes from a too close attention to making one's living, but it must also prepare one to take an essential part in the humane efforts of life—to understand human nature, to enjoy the quality of human experience. Some institutions which most courageously cling to the old curriculums and especially to the classics, unfortunately fail to demonstrate that the classics or the old curriculums teach men and women to live. In such colleges today Latin and Greek are still taught, and mathematics, and the other survivals of the humanistic discipline; but the students are graduated without much knowledge of the classics, and with little love of them, and without any palpable disposition toward the rigor and the beauty of mathematical thought.

Obviously it is not the subject that guarantees liberal training, though we persist in believing that the study of theology ought to yield another sort of wisdom than the study of life insurance. The liberal college may have to be defined partly in terms of the subjects it teaches, but partly also in terms

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of its way of teaching them—perhaps most of all in terms of what it does not teach.

I have somewhat exaggerated the contrast between those institutions of learning which claim to be liberal although they offer training chiefly of a technical or professional kind, and those institutions which claim to be liberal because they teach nothing with which you can earn your living. These alternatives do exist, but they are extremes. If we were spared any further complication, we might even from these extremes observe a satisfactory definition of the liberal college. Yet we should have to remind ourselves of the chief weakness of the American college education today—the weakness which makes it hard to say that any college is liberal; we should have to remind ourselves that our college education is overwhelmingly preoccupied with our own moment in time, with our own spot on the globe, with our own private perplexities.

Is not the fact known to us all? The educational prophets have been urging us to be at home in our environment, to be children of our own day. We are told to learn the world we live in. If we are no longer directed to the ant for moral wisdom, we are at least advised to consider the spider and the caterpillar, which seem to accept without argument the station and the moment of life in which instinct and the family chronology have placed them. We have made, therefore, a heroic effort in our college education to be contemporary. To live only in the moment, to imagine only one's own place, was once thought to be the fate of the stupid. We have made it the ideal of the educated. Contemporary history, contemporary literature, contemporary science, contemporary society—as who should say contemporary multiplication table, contemporary gravitation, contemporary solar system! How liberal it sounds, to be up-to-date. What a miracle of culture, to be interested in our own affairs, and to see best, and somewhat exclusively, what is under our nose!

Whether or not trades and professions should be included in the curriculum of a liberal college, whether or not Latin and Greek can safely be omitted from it, of this one principle I personally have little doubt, that no college is liberal which trains its students to identify the excellent or the important exclusively with the contemporary. Not all epochs have been beautiful or significant; some of them have been less happy to live in than others. To discover the principles, moral or æsthetic or political, which assured immortality to Troy in Asia Minor and comparative obscurity to Troy, New York, would be to free ourselves from the prison of egotism, and to have our part in the complete citizenship of mankind. But if what is contemporary and near is always the best, then the poets of modern Greece are better than Homer, the poets of Italy today are better than Virgil or Dante, and our American poets, particularly those in our own neighborhood, are better than Whitman or Emerson or Poe.

Even if all the moments of a life were equally beautiful and important, it would hardly be enough to confine our attention to one of them; for life, as the most contemporary of us knows, is a moving thing, and to get its direction we must study the path it has already marked out. To know anything about life, therefore, we must step out of our moment to observe the moments left behind and to reflect upon them. This all the more, the more concerned we are with the future, with the advance of experience. It is old and not new experience that attains to the prophetic strain.

> By how much one man has more experience of things past than another, [says Hobbes] by so much also he is more Prudent, and his expectations the seldomer fail him. . . . And though it be called Prudence, when the event answereth our Expectation; yet in its own nature, it is but Presumption. For the foresight of things to come, which is Providence, belongs only to him by whose will they are to come. From him only, and supernaturally, proceeds Prophecy. The best Prophet naturally is the best guesser, and the best guesser, he that is most versed and studied in the matters he guesses at; for he hath most Signs to guess by. A sign is the Event Antecedent, of the Consequent; and contrarily, the Consequent of the Antecedent, when the like Consequences have been observed before: And the oftener they have been observed, the less uncertain is the Sign. And therefore he that has most experience in any kind of business, has most Signs, whereby to guess at the Future time, and consequently is the most prudent: And so much more prudent than he that is new in that kind of business, as not to be equalled by any advantage of natural and extemporary wit: though perhaps many young men think the contrary.

I ought not to quote an author who wrote so much sense so long ago. But Hobbes seems wiser than some of the writers of today. Perhaps a really liberal education should prejudice us in favor of those authors who are wise. In my youth Hobbes enjoyed a vogue much inferior to that of Robert Louis Stevenson; today the college catalogues lay more emphasis on Bernard Shaw than on the seventeenth century critic. But he is an example of what the truly liberal college would concern itself with. He is not comtemporary, and never was exclusively so. He has the power to reveal life to us, now or fifty years from now. Not for an age, but for all time—the men of whom this can be said, and only they, should be the idols of the liberal college; only those books and those ideas have properly a place there, which in their sum do indeed constitute the best that has been said or thought in the world. The student who is graduated from a liberal college ought to know Hobbes; he ought also to know Pascal, and Plato and Bacon, and Homer and Spinoza and Galileo and Leonardo da Vinci—and those other giants, and all their works, of whom, alas, the list is not too long. Even if we agree to study the best that has been said or thought in the world, some of

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us fear that there is not time enough in the college course to study it all. This fear is base self-flattery. There have not been so many great men, nor many great ideas. If the curriculum is crowded now, it is because we are studying temporary things, which being second-rate are numerous. From all such luggage a liberal education would liberate us.

In our study of literature, for example, we now spend much time on inferior authors—minor poets, minor novelists, minor essayists; we perhaps spend even more time on criticism of these authors by other writers less important still. If we read Synge's Riders to the Sea, we soon think we must read a life of Synge by someone whose name we forget. Compared with Synge's play, the book about him is unimportant; compared with King Lear or the Antigone, Synge's play is unimportant. A liberal education in literature would, I think, teach us first to do without the secondary books that collect like barnacles around the masterpieces; and it then would teach us to distinguish among the masterpieces. I remember hearing Mr. Woodberry say long ago that for the educated man and woman this is fortunately a world of disappearing books; that when you begin with a love of Stephen Phillips, for example, you soon find him swallowed up in Tennyson; that when you know Tennyson well enough, you begin to read him in Malory or perhaps in Virgil; that when you know your Virgil, you perhaps find him, and Tennyson and Phillips, all contained in Homer. This was the sort of liberal education that Plato had in mind for us, when he imagined the soul as rising from the worship of a lower to the worship of a higher beauty. In such an ascent there would constantly be fewer objects of beauty to love—a great simplifying of the curriculum; but the beauty would be greater and the love stronger.

If our courses of literature, then, attended to the few great poets and prosemen, the courses in history, and those in philosophy, might confine themselves to the few great historians and the few great philosophers. There would be difficulties here, as we all realize. We like to teach our own contemporary philosophy, or our private idea of history, which unfortunately is not yet famous in the world. But the student of history who has mastered our ideas of ancient Greece, and in the process has had no leisure to read Herodotus or Thucydides, may be said to have missed something. In science, too, the emphasis might well be upon the few essential principles of the subject. Some scientists, I know, feel that in their subject every step is essential, even sacred, and that no discrimination is possible among the links of the chain by which their kind of truth is lifted from the well. If they were right, I should feel that science was hardly a proper subject for the liberal college, since a subject so routine in its processes could teach no liberation of the mind. But I believe the scientists are wrong who take this attitude toward their subject, and that the peaks of scientific achievement can be recognized and can be made recognizable.

To simplify the curriculum in this fashion, to choose only the best things, would be an heroic achievement for any college faculty. Yet a liberal education would give each of us some degree of power to know good from evil, to be connoisseurs of life. I often wonder how the student is to learn discrimination from a curriculum which includes everything under the sun. The liberal college would be known by the many things it would decline to notice, as well as by its insistence on the few—the very few—golden accomplishments of the race. In a world growing so rapidly more complex, that education indeed would be liberal which reminded us always how few things are really necessary, and which are the necessary things.

And some of the necessary things in a sense are contemporary. We should study Hobbes in a liberal college, even if he had just begun to write. We should choose him not because he was of our time, but because he seemed timeless. To discriminate, to derive a sense of values from experience longer and wider than our own, would be the fruit of liberal education.

JOHN ERSKINE.

Gambling With Miners' Lives

MINE explosions shock the American public into a momentary realization of the hazards of mining. But the toll of human lives from day to day goes by unnoticed save for a paragraph in the local press and an entry in the statisticians' columns. A loss of 372 lives in explosions in a single year is horrible indeed, but in the same year more than six times this number were killed in the coal mines of the United States. Caught by falling rock or slate or coal; run over by cars and motors; electrocuted; crushed by machinery, and in numberless other ways were these other 2,080 lives snuffed out. This record of 1923 was not unusual—it was typical; it is cited because it affords the latest complete figures. We can say with statistical proof that such a record has continued only with slight variations for the past thirty-six years—a death-rate of one man for practically every quarter-million tons of coal mined. Despite the remarkable advance in technical knowledge and engineering skill to overcome the physical impediments to mining, and despite the development of labor-saving machinery, the miner continues to pay the same price in blood.

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This annual toll of lives appears more horrible when it is realized that with the industry properly managed, the great majority of such tragedies could be prevented. Mine explosions are caused by either of two things, sometimes a combination of both—the ignition of marsh gas (methane) given off by the strata; or the ignition of coal dust. The answer is obvious: remove the gas by adequate ventilation and remove the danger of the dust by wetting or better still by mixing with non-inflammable rock or shale dust. British mine regulations for the past five years have required rock-dust treatment of dangerous mines, the result being a complete vindication of the method. The mines of Belgium are considered the most gaseous in the world, but through careful management and proper methods of prevention, no widespread explosion has occurred there in the past thirty years. Miners, managers, inspectors, engineers—everyone connected with the mining industry in the United States—possess sufficient knowledge to prevent mine explosions, but in a highly competitive industry, with thousands of companies scrambling for the markets, production first, not safety, is the driving force.

The safety lamp for the prevention of explosions has been the main reliance of the management in the past and even today much dependence is placed upon this device—it is much cheaper than the maintenance of proper ventilation or the special treatment of gas and dust. But the miner is wary of the safety lamp. Experience has taught him what his British brothers learned when the "Davy" lamp was invented in England more than a hundred years ago—now as then it often becomes a substitute for proper ventilation, with consequent disregard of dangerous accumulations of gas and dust. Moreover, the small candle power of the safety lamp may trick the miner into dangers other than gas. This holds true of the modern miner's electric lamp which is displacing the original safety lamp, the latter being mainly confined to testing purposes. The term "bug light" expresses the miner's universal condemnation of this electric lamp—"about as much light as a lightning bug in a bottle." The miner's preference is the carbide lamp—with it he has a better chance to see what he is doing. But its open flame is admittedly dangerous in gaseous mines when attention to ventilation lags.

Falls of roof or "face" claimed nearly one-half of the 2,452 lives of 1923. For each week of the year an average of twenty-two lives! The attention of the nation was focussed for two weeks upon the tragic experience of a cave explorer, but these tragedies of the coal mines go by unheeded. Since mining was begun this type of accident has been dismissed by the mine owners with the statement, "he was too lazy or too greedy to set a prop and paid the penalty." This slander has been repeated by thousands of coroners' juries and even the Bureau of Mines in publications and lectures has stressed this "carelessness" of the miner. The cause is not so easily determined though this explanation is very convenient for the company's conscience. It had its origin in the early days of mining when it was easier to shift responsibility than to study the problem.

Into this class of accident must fall the greater number of those recognized as part of the natural hazards of mining. Of all the accidents in and around the mine, here is where the skill and knowledge of the miner largely determine whether or not he escapes injury. But the skill of the most experienced miner is of little avail if he has no time to apply it. To work safely under dangerous natural conditions, one must work leisurely. With the economic pressure of an insufficient wage, with only an intermittent chance to work, and with this aggravated by the uncertainty of the daily "turn," the result is hurry, with the best eye on production. Safety becomes a secondary consideration.

The piece-work basis of pay deserves consideration here. The present-day tendency, insisted upon by coal companies, is a larger and ever larger individual production. This is expressed in the company's choice of young men in preference to the older men of longer experience. The superiority of the American coal miner in the matter of individual production is maintained at a high cost of human life.

Another factor in these accidents at the coal "face," and one entirely overlooked by both the management and the Bureau of Mines, is the haphazard placing of men as "buddies" without regard to differences of race, religion and temperament. Talk about coöperation, the keynote of all safety lectures, here is where coöperation really means something! And what sort of coöperation can be had between a Catholic and a Communist, for example, a "hunky" and a "hundred-percenter," an old man set in his ways and a young, impatient hustler? With safety depending entirely on what one sees and hears, backed up by knowledge and experience, and where judgment is often the deciding factor, accord between "buddies" is extremely important.

Haulage accidents in coal mines are responsible for a startling number of deaths. In 1923 the total, 413 men, exceeds even the number killed by explosions. This fact becomes more tragic when it is known that such accidents are largely attributable to faulty equipment. To stop for repairs would interrupt the stream of coal coming from the "face" to the "bottom," the crime of crimes in a coal mine. Hoisting must continue, the chance is taken, and the accident—well, a little bad luck. Proper inspection of equipment—not a book inspection but one with a personal responsibility attached—would prevent many such accidents, but "record hoists" must be paid for.

A few coal companies in recent years have instituted what they call the "Safety Inspector" whose duty it is to prevent accidents through "coöperation and education." I have been told by many such

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men that their instructions were to "go as far as you like, but don't do anything that will curtail production or increase its cost." This leaves the Safety Inspector with little to do save wander about a mine advising "the setting of a prop there," "the taking down of that piece of rock" and other unwelcome advice. The miner's resentment is quite natural and not without justification does he claim "I know a damn sight more about this room than he does—I'm in it all day and he only comes in for a few minutes at a time." The Inspector may teach a night class—usually small—in "First Aid"; the superintendent will boast of the company's efforts toward accident prevention and complain of lack of coöperation from the miners; and accidents will continue as of yore.

The real worth of this widely-advertised safety movement is epitomized in two signs at a mine in central Illinois. On the smoke-stack in figures six feet high, RECORD HOIST, 5,346 TONS; on a beam just above the miners' entrance to the cage, a pathetic little enamel sign in letters three inches high, Safety First.

The Bureau of Mines has done good work in its experimental stations in the study of mine explosions, their cause and prevention. This problem was one that could be taken into the laboratory and studied, with the results later verified in experimental mines. It was merely a matter of apparatus with trained chemists and engineers working in their elements. That explosions have continued with all their frightfulness is no fault of the Bureau of Mines inasmuch as it is without power to compel the application of its findings.

In the field of First Aid the Bureau's work is worthy of praise. Many a miner has cause to remember gratefully the service of First Aid men trained by the Bureau's representatives in the travelling cars. As for mine rescue work, it is practically agreed that its results have been a great disappointment.

In the study of mine accidents other than explosions the Bureau of Mines apparently began with the theory that the average miner is a moron and that most mine accidents can be traced to his ignorance, greed and carelessness. A good illustration of this viewpoint is contained in a Bureau publication, Dangerous and Safe Practices in Bituminous Coal Mines, a pamphlet of a hundred pages of photographic examples ranging from the obvious to the ridiculous. The reaction of every miner I have asked to examine this pamphlet has been expressed in guffaws or profanity, the butt being the "professors" in the Bureau of Mines. The Bureau underestimates the skill of the foreign miner—as if a miner's inability to speak the English language would necessarily preclude any knowledge of coal mining! Europe has sent this country great numbers of experienced miners; moreover, many miners bearing foreign names are of the second generation in America. Proceeding on the theory of the ignorant miner, these experts concentrate on the individual to make him always conscious of the dangers to be avoided, disregarding the problem of providing a safer environment. What would you think of a highway commissioner who tried to educate people to drive carefully over a bad piece of road as a substitute for repairing the road? Always is the miner admonished, "Work right. There is only one way to work right and that is to work safe." So the good work of preventing accidents by warnings and slogans and signs goes on.

The truth is the Bureau of Mines has failed to reach the miner. Its viewpoint has in the main been absorbed from the operators in whose opinion the miners' laziness, greed and ignorance account for most mine accidents. The miner has not been able to speak out strongly enough nor often enough to impress on the public his analysis of mine accidents. More articulate and closer to the avenues of publicity, the operator has been able to get his viewpoint over, not only to the public but to the Bureau of Mines.

Another criticism of the Bureau of Mines is the continued false optimism of its reports. A reading of the prefaces without a close scrutiny of the figures leaves the impression that the accident rate in coal mines is being steadily lowered. Quoting from the preface to Miners' Circular No. 22: "In 1907, 4.81 men were killed out of every 1,000 employed in the coal mines of this country. In 1916 the number killed per 1,000 employed was 3.03." The Bureau optimist fails to state that in the year 1907 two explosions accounted for 600 deaths, making the death-rate for that year exceptionally high. Obviously it should not be taken as a point of comparison. The effort toward optimism appears even more strained when it is noted how widely separated are the years chosen for comparison. We learn from Bulletin No. 241, Coal Mine Fatalities in the U. S., 1923, that "the fatality rate per million tons was 3.82 as compared with 4.15 for 1922, a decline of about 8 percent. The average rate for the decade ending with 1922 was 4.11. This reduction of 8 percent in the fatal accident rate per million tons is equivalent to the saving of 210 lives—that is, had the fatality rate of 1922 continued through 1923, the number of lives lost would have been 210 more than they actually were." A recent press dispatch says that the Bureau announces a death-rate of 4.27 per million tons for 1924. Now, if someone is to take the credit for "saving" the 8 percent or 210 lives in 1923, who is to take the blame for the additional loss of 11 percent in 1924 over 1923? By inference a natural fluctuation is made to appear as an improvement in the situation.

What of the Miners' Union? Much might be said, but boiled down the answer is that the union officials are kept busy adjusting disputes concerning wages and working conditions. Besides, the operators are extremely jealous of encroachments upon their rights as managers of the industry, yielding

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nothing not "nominated in the bond." State laws for mine safety are the result of the union's political activities; to correct any evasion of these laws the union is obliged to appeal to the State Inspection Bureaus. Higher union officials sometimes participate in safety conferences, but as yet the Miners' Union has no definite program of accident prevention.

The individual operator is not to be blamed for the situation. In this highly competitive industry yielding to humanitarianism would lead him straight to bankruptcy. Nor can we hope for any appreciable reduction in the accident rate in coal mines with the miner shut out from the affairs of management. In any adequate program for safety it is indispensable that the miner be recognized as a responsible party in the industry; whether this is to be achieved through the public ownership of the mines or through clauses in the wage contract under private ownership, is a matter for the future to disclose. One thing is certain, the things that need to be done cannot and will not be done with the industry managed as at present.

EDWARD A. WIECK.

The Ineffectual Mr. Coolidge

TO any unbiassed observer, who does not dig below surface facts, the amazing strength of Mr. Coolidge with the people and his equally amazing weakness in Congress must seem an absurd contradiction. The two facts, plain to all, simply do not check up. No ordinary process of reasoning seems sufficient to reconcile them.

Mere denunciation of Congress is an evasion, not an answer, although it is the favorite reply of the President's defenders. Congress is elected by the people just as is the President and is responsive to the same popular sentiment. It is easy, of course, to understand that, when it is controlled by one party and the Executive belongs to the other, conflicts arise and futility results. When, however, the great power of the presidential office is considered, and when both are of the same party, it is hard to comprehend why, for instance, a Republican President on the threshold of his term with thousands of political plums to distribute, and the lustre of a seven million popular majority at the polls still bright on his brow, should be unable to obtain from a Republican Senate confirmation of an appointment to his Cabinet, or muster more than a bare one-third vote to sustain his veto. That such a President, under such conditions, should consistently have the policies he advocates rejected, and the measures he opposes, without exception, forced upon him, is practically without precedent.

That this is what has happened to Mr. Coolidge is the simple truth. The bald facts leave no escape from the conclusion that, however sound his ideas and correct his position, as an executive and a party leader he has in the past two years established an extraordinary record for feebleness and futility. Compare it, for a moment, with "Al" Smith's brilliant record at Albany, made in the face of a hostile Republican majority in both branches of the Legislature. The contrast is so striking that it is unnecessary to make the logical deduction. It makes itself. If what has happened half a dozen times to Mr. Coolidge had happened once to the British Prime Minister, the resignation of the government would immediately have followed and a new election been held. In America, failure of support does not lessen by a day the fixed four year term. Mr. Coolidge has not had one adverse vote from Congress in two years, he has had six or seven. His inability to get Congress to pass his pet bills, or to prevent Congress from passing its own, has been demonstrated at least thus often. It happened before his election and since. It happened in the Senate and in the House. It happened with the Senate elected before he became President and it has happened with the new Senate.

A list of the distasteful things Congress has done to Mr. Coolidge runs all the way from the shelving of his World Court pleas, and the ignoring of his agricultural recommendations, to the passing of the bonus over his veto and the insertion of the Japanese exclusion clause against his protest, not to mention the rejection of his appointments and the raising of its own salary. When it is analyzed and reviewed, it is an astounding record, the full force and significance of which is not grasped by the American people because it has not been fairly nor fully presented to them. The literal fact is that in two years Mr. Coolidge has failed to put through a single thing he wanted, and has had put through, in spite of him, all of the things he particularly did not want. That statement will not be disputed by any posted person.

Notwithstanding these undeniable facts, climaxing with the historic and humiliating rejection of his candidate for Attorney-General, we find two things unmistakably clear:

First, that the great business and financial forces of the country are still more solidly back of Mr. Coolidge than of any President in a generation;

Second, the press support and protection given Mr. Coolidge is still greater than that any other President ever had.

In America—and in most other countries—public sentiment is made, not reflected, by the business interests and the newspapers. Between them, they give the public its political views. Between them, they have created a feeling, general throughout the country, that Mr. Coolidge is a safe, sound, sincere

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man. If the one word, "ineffectual," is added, that comes fairly close to being an accurate description of the President.

These two forces—the business interests and the newspapers—are almost—not quite, but almost—as solidly back of him now, in spite of his record of failures, as they were before he made it. And, such is the power of propaganda, and the difficulties of getting a clear picture to the people, that the continued and unbroken support of these two elements has thus far prevented general public recognition that it is a record of failures.

Right here, of course, it is pertinent to ask why, under the circumstances, this support is so unshaken. The most adequate answer is this—people today groan under the weight of taxes, as they have not groaned before, and there was never a time when governmental economy and tax reduction seemed so desirable. At the start and in his first message, Mr. Coolidge struck the economy key. There was nothing original about that. Every public man does the same thing. However, it was followed by the presentation of the Mellon bill, a measure which aroused in the breast of big business almost unprecedented enthusiasm. It proposed such a lovely and luscious cut in the surtaxes on large individual and corporate incomes that over night the whole business, banking and railroad world slid behind Mr. Coolidge and there froze solid. And with them went a newspaper support such as had heretofore only been accorded a war president. That's where he was elected.

And they are still back of him—business men, railroad executives, bankers, newspapers. These really constitute the country. The rest either swing in behind them, or are too negligible to count. It is true the Mellon bill upon which they had set their hearts did not get through Congress last time. It was literally shot to pieces by the Coolidge opposition, and a measure passed wholly different in detail and principle to the one Mr. Coolidge advocated. Reluctantly and under pressure, he signed it. It cut the taxes on the small incomes, not the large ones, thus rejecting the basic principle of the Coolidge-Mellon-Wall Street-newspaper creed, that the real way to lighten the load of the little fellow is to lighten the big fellow's load first.

Naturally, there was bitter disappointment in business circles, but Mr. Coolidge promised that, if elected, at the next session he would enact a new Mellon bill. His recent defeat in the new Senate, made possible by votes in his own party, indicates considerable doubt as to whether he can "make good" next time any more than he did the last. Still the prospect and the promise are enough to hold his support together with a fair degree of solidity. It has slipped a little, but it has not slipped much.

It is a rather absurd situation. The newspapers and the business interests so overwhelmingly committed themselves to him in the campaign that now when the inherent helplessness of the man is beginning to be revealed, they valiantly struggle to keep from admitting, even to themselves, that their hero is not as heroic as he seemed. To confess their judgment so far off the mark, so soon after his inauguration would put these editors and business leaders in a position far too foolish to be comfortable. It is too much to expect of them—certainly now. Besides, there is no sense in shifting support. There is no place else to go. They are beginning to suspect they will not get what they want through Mr. Coolidge, because he has not the strength to give it, but they certainly will not get it from anyone else. They put him in for four years, and there he is to the end of the row—sincere, sound, solemn—and ineffectual.

FRANK R. KENT.

Race-Suicide No Murder

THE international Neo-Malthusian and Birth Control Conference held in New York from March 25 to 31 was not interrupted—as some people had feared, and others hoped—by any sort of hooligans. A noteworthy group of experts and specialists, social, medical and scientific, contributed sixty odd papers to the program. As was to be expected, there was uniformity in the conclusions and a multiplicity in approach which was most significant; indeed, the problem was shown against so many different backgrounds and from so many angles that an uncritical enthusiast might be excused a belief that in birth control was a panacea for all human ills. Though this is unfortunately not true, it is no exaggeration to say that the problem of population inevitably dominates the solution of all other problems, social and international. Socially, birth control is at present an instructive form of class privilege: it belongs to the dominating class as definitely as money control, and as with money the plight of the unprivileged menaces the privileged. Internationally all our hopes of abolishing war are bound up with it. Indeed we might say that the only people not fiddling while New York and all civilization is burning, are those who are alive to the population question.

Naturally, there was much incompatibility of outlook within the conference, and arguments for birth control advocated by one group tended sometimes to nullify the arguments of another group. Thus the social workers and doctors were most anxious to convince public opinion of the folly of denying all knowledge of contraception to a woman who was bound to be killed by her next pregnancy, or

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to a struggling family well able to maintain two but not more children, or to a woman whose offspring would be diseased or subnormal and a burden thenceforth to the community: as it in no way affected their position they were quite willing to combat the argument that birth control was race-suicide by referring to vital statistics which prove that a low birth rate means a low death rate and no interference with the natural increase of population. Now to the sociologist who knows perfectly well that England, for example, would be better off with fifteen million fewer inhabitants this is somewhat of a stab in the back: and his argument is developed along quite different lines.

Again there was the personal equation: some of the doctors emphasized strongly the need to abolish legal prohibition of their giving advice on contraceptives. Now everybody knows that many doctors have fought an exceedingly difficult battle on this point, and that the laws must go needs no emphasizing, but when a doctor refuses to break the law to save a life, he reveals a worse thing than a bad law and that is his own lack of a sense of fitness. Doctors as a class are the most conservative, law-respecting, unimaginative class of citizen: nobody except a schoolmaster can succeed in being so little man of the world, in the better sense. However, the main point worth noticing here is that some of them do not realize that for every person who asks advice of a doctor about birth control, ninety-nine get what they want from sources, which, even in New York, are far more accessible. It was of course laughable that Dr. Haine, reading a translation of a German paper, had to substitute the general word "device" for the particular term in the text, in order to avoid being arrested and imprisoned for obscenity, it was amusing that lantern slides of clinical work were replaced by the censor with a slide of the American flag, but everybody knows that the law is a jackass and acts accordingly; and legalizing the giving of information by a doctor will not in itself produce much effect except in exceptional cases. The important fact is not so much the ridiculous laws, but that any educated doctor should refuse to break them in the interests of a human life, when he must know that they are broken daily by most intelligent people as a prudential measure as well as by the vicious who are not stopped by a law from making the world safe for viciousness. But this is part of a larger problem. The stale breath of public opinion thinks that birth control is in some way indecent, because it does not realize that sex plays a part in life beyond bare legs on Broadway and the things little boys chalk upon walls. Perhaps Dr. Max Schlapp went too far in attributing the vice of extreme puritanism to faults in the endocrine system, but he was at least right in pointing out the existence of that vice. While sex is regarded as unclean, birth control will not be respectable: but the problem at once goes beyond the range of neo-Malthusianism.

Among so many it is invidious to mention special lecturers by name, but the conference was indebted to Dr. Ira S. Wile for his frankly agnostic paper, agnostic not about birth control and its necessity, but about our knowledge of the criteria needed directly we turn from the purely negative side to the constructive and positive. The best results of the conference would be first to convince people that the subject of birth control is not parochial, not a question of the bastard sister of infant welfare being legitimized, but the most vital, urgent and dangerous question of all time; and second that we must set to work not only on birth control propaganda among the masses, but on the huge volume of scientific research required to enable us to use the power it gives to humanity. We know nothing at all positive about all sorts of vital problems, every specialist has his own drum to beat. For example there was Prof. P. W. Whiting who said that morons were due to a "single recessive Mendelian factor," that is, that the adult who could only pass a certain standard in highly artificial intelligence tests had inherited his defect from his parents according to Mendelian laws; and there was Prof. Max Schlapp who showed that children were born idiots because the mother's ductless glands were out of order through shock during pregnancy. Only in a state of rudimentary knowledge do respectable scientists allow themselves to generalize thus. In so far as there remain intelligent people unconvinced of the importance of *controlling birth control*—for that is the point, not birth control merely which is always with us; are we to let it be monopolized for anti-social uses or to adopt it for social uses as well?—the first step is to destroy the mythology used by its opponents in their attacks. Ten smiling children down and a hundred healthy descendants on your golden wedding day is the sort of thing which is put up as the alternative to the controlled small family. The Conference did good service by showing that the real alternative is bachelors afraid to incur the responsibilities of marriage, or bankrupt, harassed, irritable fathers; mothers like vegetables, colorless, jaded, depressed; high infant mortality, still births, illegal abortions, cripples, imbeciles. Indeed we must admit that though the loins of Father Abraham were doubtless good in their place, that place has now been obliterated by the New York skyline and our modern civilization and that it is no use crying for the moon.

Once the golden chimæra of a pastoral alternative is blown away, the question is seen to resolve itself into *death control through birth control.* Mankind is both the plants and the gardener; in a limited space we can grow but a certain number of seeds. Plant more and the seedlings will be stunted, many will die and all may be starved—that is China; the gardener can break down his neighbor's wall and plant next door—that is every lethal nation in western civilization; or he can limit his

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seeds and count on raising all of them—that is the "League of Low-Birth Nations" of the future, to quote Harold Cox. The only question is whether we prefer plague, pestilence and famine as our helpers and the paving of our progress to the moralist's heaven with gnarled and stunted women and children, or are willing to "tamper with nature." Some people seem to have lost the courage of primitive man in the face of nature; the savage to whom nature must have been far more mysterious and dangerous than she can be to Babbitt today, tampered with her when he began to use fire, to plough fields, to wear clothes, to tame animals, but the modern fundamentalist though he will cause his children to pass through the fire unto the Moloch of war, will not tamper with nature—the human conscience is a parti-colored bird. It is along the lines of birth control and national futures that the Neo-Malthusian League must devote most of its energies. The medical aspects are so clear that it cannot be long before the immediate and simpler objects are attained. Already in many parts of the world the practice of birth control occupies in countless minds the same position as teeth cleaning: the only reason why it is not talked about is that it contains no element of mystery. But it is only at that point that the new problems arise.

Thus one speaker said that Malthus had been disproved in so far as there was no need to go to war for bread. True, wars are not fought for bread, but they are fought for the jam. Man has long ago refused to live by bread alone and the whole problem has become tremendously tangled by that unknown quantity *the standard of living*: wars are fought because groups of men are discontented with their standard of living. Whenever the birth rate is high the standard of living is low, but this in itself does not lead to discontent, nor war; as we see by once more turning to China. It is only when changing circumstances lead to a rapid drop in the standard of living that discontent leads to war; such a period engulfs us at present in the West and especially in America. Never in the history of the world has so high a standard of living existed as in America at the present moment, hence the greater need of America for a progressively diminishing birth rate. American can absorb a far larger population, but you do not wait till the glass is full to overflowing before beginning to turn off the tap.

Perhaps, however, it is England which best illustrates the dangers of the future: her population came into being at the direct call of coal and iron: the coal age is well-nigh over and England can never hope to employ her population to the full again: there is literally nothing to look forward to for her, unless the population is rapidly reduced. In the face of such stupendous problems as these the importance of such a conference as the present needs no sort of emphasis: it is, however, worth while noting that pioneers like Mrs. Margaret Sanger, who began by an emotional reaction to the problems of a few sick and derelict women, by their human sympathy were led to put their finger upon the most universal of all human problems. In so doing they have been opposed by all the small minds but they have the excellent example of Prometheus with which to fortify themselves. Science and its advances have always appeared obscene to some men, but the possibility of holding such a conference in New York only four and a half years after the famous piece of hypocrisy triumphant staged at the Town Hall is an indication that the vestments even of hypocrisy wear out in course of time.

There must, however, be no hypocrisy within the neo-Malthusian movement itself and the less such phrases as "our debt to posterity" are used by its supporters the better for all. Race-suicide, if by that is meant the drastic reduction of population, needs no apology and no whitewashing: criminal neglect no matter in what holy name of the warnings of science as to the dangers of unrestricted population is, however, indeed self-murder. But no more important question came before the Conference than the incentive to have children which can be offered to intelligent men and women, and it is in this connection that the phrase "debt to posterity" is so ill-advised. Unlike the sexual instinct the maternal and paternal instincts seem in the eyes of the moralist not to be in need of control. No one was ever ostracized for excessive indulgence in them, but quite a good case can be made out for the point of view that to bear a child today is an unwarrantable piece of self-indulgence on the part of the parents. That child is forced by our economic system to be an exploiter or to be exploited; he has an even chance of being killed in a war; he will spend nearly all his life doing work of little interest to himself and useless to everyone else. As far as "debt to posterity" is concerned the boot is manifestly on the other leg: but thank Heaven we have all got some honest paternal selfishness left or the world would have even fewer intelligent families than it does possess. Once more the solution goes farther than the program of such a conference.

JOHN LANGDON-DAVIES.

The Song-Sparrow

Like the rusty can cocked over my grindstone
Dripping its silvery drops, the song-sparrow sings,
A spray of notes out of his frail throat flown
Over the fallow world. Loudly he sings

And the fine rain of the sun drills in the air
Riddling his branch with light, though along the ground
Shadows are rising on their knees who hear
Earth turn towards darkness with a most solemn sound.

Yet all tonight his voice will vibrate on
His echo shake the heavens until in showers
Like loosened petals the white stars rain down.
Tomorrow we'll be finding the first flowers.

SCHUYLER JACKSON.

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The Russian Wheat Crop Fails

EVERYONE now knows that the prosperity of the American farmer depends to a considerable degree upon the state of the world market. President Coolidge's majority last November was augmented by the sudden and unprecedented increase in the price of farm products, and, in particular, wheat. This increase was at least in part the result of inadequate crops in other countries; though the subsequent boom which carries wheat over $2 was not warranted by the facts, as the sensational collapse of recent weeks—the most extensive ever recorded in an equal period of time—has demonstrated.

In looking ahead to see what is in store for the coming year, the condition of the world market is a factor of prime importance; and it is therefore news of great interest that in one country another disastrous failure of the wheat crop is impending. Russia, which before the war produced considerably more wheat than did the United States, and in 1923 exported nearly 400,000 tons, must import during 1925 an amount which Soviet officials estimate at 500,000 tons, and is probably nearer to 1,000,000. If she is able to finance imports of such size her purchase will have a decided effect upon the world market; if she is not, she will have to pass through another terrible famine.

The difficult situation in which Russia finds herself is due chiefly to accidents of the weather. In the summer of 1924 a drouth, less severe than the catastrophic one of 1921, but still serious, put an end to all wheat exports. Attention was then concentrated on the winter planting. According to official reports, the area seeded to winter wheat in 1924 was fully as large as or larger than that of the preceding year. There were some apprehensions regarding poor seed, but these were soon forgotten in the presence of even more disturbing factors.

Alarming reports came in from various localities regarding ravages by insects and other pests; before the snow came it was estimated officially that about a quarter of the winter wheat was thus affected. But on top of this misfortune came another. The winter just past has been singularly free from snow; and in February ice descended upon the land. As soon as this ice melts some of the grain is certain to mould. The Soviet government estimates that at least a million acres will thus be lost. This amount of land and another million and a half acres or more, ruined by insects, must be completely reseeded, for which purpose seed must be taken from the amount that is on hand for the spring planting.

But unfortunately there is not enough seed available for this purpose. For several months strenuous efforts have been made by the Moscow government to distribute seed, a process which has been carried through clumsily and inadequately. The shortage in seed, all told, will amount to 150,000 or 200,000 tons, according to official estimate. This deficit cannot be met from Russian stocks and must be obtained abroad.

To this, however, must be added the amount of grain which at the barest minimum will need to be imported to carry the population through the year. The present estimates of the Commissariat of Internal Trade say that 500,000 tons constitute the minimum which must be imported. This estimate, in my judgment, is extremely conservative. It is made without any knowledge of the exact damage sustained by the winter wheat, or of the acreage or yield of the spring crop.

In the case of the latter there is another factor which adds to the difficulty. Unusually large quantities of cattle have been slaughtered in the past six months, because of the shortage of fodder crops. Indeed, due to lack of refrigeration facilities the amount of meat forced suddenly upon the market was so large that the price declined rapidly. This shortage of cattle extends to horses; and in consequence Russia has fewer draft animals than she has had for several years past. This, of course, increases the difficulties under which the peasants must work. In view of all these factors I believe present official estimates of import requirements are only half as large as the facts demand; and that Russia will probably need at least one million tons of foreign grain.

Can she arrange such large imports? That remains to be seen. Her export trade has shown considerable falling off since she stopped the exportation of grain. During the last three months of 1923 her total exports equalled 107.4 million gold rubles at pre-War prices. Of this amount 70.1 million rubles represented foodstuffs. During the corresponding period of 1924 the exports of foodstuffs equalled only 16.7 million rubles, with the total exports amounting to 74.8 millions. The balance of trade was still in her favor during October-December, 1924, but it totalled only 13.3 million rubles, as compared with 60.8 millions during the corresponding period of 1923.

Since the disappearance of the grain exports, Russia has made strenuous efforts to increase the exports of other products. She has not succeeded in this with regard to timber, her second largest export item: the volume of timber exports during the last three months of 1924 was actually smaller than during the corresponding period of 1923. She did put across her frontiers in 1924 more flax and petroleum than in 1923, but this increase was not nearly sufficient to make up the losses incurred in the grain trade. Russia's actual purchasing power abroad this year is noticeably smaller than it was

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last year. It constitutes but a slight basis for wheat imports.

Russia may be able to use for the purpose of buying wheat some of her stocks of gold and foreign currencies. But this would be a dangerous step. These stocks are earmarked as cover for the chervonetz currency, established with great difficulty during the past two years. A withdrawal of any considerable portion of them might entail again serious monetary difficulties within the country. As it is, currency inflation has been going on steadily for months past, and is fast reaching the straining point.

As for foreign commercial credits, their availability on an adequate scale seems scarcely within the scope of possibilities, in view of the breakdown of Russia's negotiations with Great Britain and the deadlock of her pourparlers with France.

There still remains foreign philanthropy. It will be remembered that in the great famine of 1921-22, American philanthropy, public and private, raised many millions for relief of Russian sufferers by the purchase of surplus American grain. Whether a similar appeal would have equally successful results in 1925 is an open question. Even if it did, that amount of money would scarcely purchase more than half as much wheat as when the market was at its lowest ebb.

Put the bravest face on it that you will, and the coming year still has an ominous look for the people of Russia.

LEO PASVOLSKY.

Working Mothers

TWO of my neighbors are working mothers. Frances Manning was in college with me, and lives next door. Her husband is a young lawyer with a future. They have two little children, nicely "spaced," and an excellent Swiss housekeeper, who does the cooking, directs the cleaning and laundry, and disciplines the children in their parents' absence. My other neighbor, Mary McGuire, lives in the little street in the rear. Her husband clerks at the corner grocery store. She too has two children and a "housekeeper"; her housekeeper is an old woman who is too feeble to work; she does "easy work, like minding children."

The economic bases of the two households make an interesting contrast. Frances has a salary of two hundred and fifty dollars a month in an advertising office; she pays her housekeeper one hundred dollars, and in honest moments grants that one hundred dollars more goes for lunches and car-fares and the other expenses involved in her working away from home. Mary makes fourteen dollars a week in a pickle factory. Out of this she pays *her* housekeeper three dollars, and manages to clear about ten dollars to add to the family budget.

Frances works because she wants to work; she is not domestic, and does not enjoy child care. We may at once grant her claim that she is fully self-supporting, in spite of her domestic handicaps. Mary works because she has to. Bill McGuire earns only eighty dollars a month, and the rent alone in their little street is thirty dollars.

Frances's husband is tremendously proud of his wife's ability. He helps to put the babies to bed, and if a child is sick they take turns at night duty. Mary's husband takes his wife's work entirely for granted, and never thinks about it at all. She looks after the babies herself at night, when they are sick.

Frances keeps her own name; she has it in the telephone book and on her cards, and corrects people who happen to call her "Mrs." Mary keeps her own name too; not because her personality is of any interest to her—as a matter of fact she has never even heard the word. She calls herself Miss because she finds it easier to get and keep a job. If the boss knows you are married he is apt to suspect that a sick child or a husband is in the offing, absorbing some of your energy and Mary has noticed that in slack times the married women are apt to be the first to go.

Frances and her husband are intensely interested in the "experiment" they are conducting. They talk about it continually. You know them, as well as I do. Mary and Bill are quite inarticulate; if they tried to describe their arrangement they would search for a much grimmer word than "experiment." Frances can tell you "how it works" so much better than I can that I shall not try. The rest of this article is chiefly about Mary.

If I had wished to get the proportion right I should have begun with fifty or a hundred Marys instead of one. For the few thousand mothers in "professional" work there are in all probability a half million "industrial" mothers in the United States. In Pennsylvania alone, out of 700,000 women "gainfully employed," more than 100,000 are married. This figure does not include the widowed—separated—divorced—all the once-married who, as well as the married, may have little children to support. On a conservative estimate, there must be something like 100,000 little children in this state alone who are cared for daily apart from their own mothers.

Industrial mothers—in contrast with their lively "professional" sisters—are inarticulate, uncomplaining, preoccupied. They join the gray stream of women pouring into our mills and factories in the early mornings; we see only their patient backs and be-draggled knots of hair as they clean their way painfully across miles and miles of shining tile;

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sometimes a chance word from a department store clerk makes us realize that she too, with all her spruce neutrality of face and dress, is the mother of little children. But in general Americans still regard the working mother as a kind of social accident; we assume vaguely that the relief agencies are "looking out" for her; even in the face of the appalling increase that the census figures register we somehow regard her stay in industry as temporary.

Out of the gray mist that has enshrouded her figure a kind of composite photograph of the industrial mother is beginning to emerge. Certain pieces of research, government reports, census figures—all help to fill in the outlines. We can see that she is young—about thirty-five, as a rule. Her family is small—there are usually only two or three children, and they are past infancy. Somehow she "sticks it" through their babyhood; even the Day Nursery—that catch-all of the economic residue among working mothers—is almost empty of little babies. She is a full-time worker, and is found in every kind of occupation open to women, not in the unskilled group alone, as is generally supposed. As women's wages go, she earns an amount equal to that of other working women. That is, her wage averages about twelve or fourteen dollars a week. If she happens to belong to the army of widows, separated or deserted mothers, she is indeed "out of luck," society's most burdened victim.

When Mary has finished her job for the day she comes home to find her "real work" awaiting her—the traditional woman's work of home-making. Unlike my friend Frances, Mary has no labor-saving devices and no financial margin for services, usually even the washing has to be done at night. When dinner is over and the children tucked in, this second "full-time job" claims her. Frances is very proud of her full-time job; Mary has found that carrying two full-time jobs in twenty-four hours, with a snatch of sleep sufficiently adequate to "keep her going," is no matter of pride. Every hour in the week has its duty. Even Sunday afternoon is filled. Mary has not seen Highland Park, though she moved to Pittsburgh ten years ago. Parks and movies can wait—but sweeping, washing, cleaning roll up like the proverbial snow-ball.

Mary has learned the inexorable fact that changes in mental attitudes, especially changes in masculine psychology, lag behind economic change. Bill comes home to rest exactly as his grandfather did before him. It would never enter his head that he might help with "women's work." Occasionally, if dinner is late, he even grumbles a little: "If a man can't have his meals on time his wife had best stop working." Both he and Mary know that this is an idle threat; they couldn't possibly get along without her wages. Still, it serves to keep her up to the mark at home.

The sight of the McGuire children playing in the alley with their lunch clutched in their hands bothers me. I have tried to persuade Mary to use the Day Nursery. I am on the Board, and can swear that it is clean and sanitary, and altogether desirable for children. I even advertise its wares: with talk of calories and vitamines, supervised play and regular medical examinations. But Mary will have none of it. "Institutions" for children, over which she has no control, conceal unknown terrors. Besides, it is a "charity." If she had no husband, or was a "foreigner" without friends, she would *have* to use it; but as yet—thank God—she is able to pay the old woman for "regular home care" for the children. In this attitude she is exactly like other working mothers. In Philadelphia, for example, where excellent day nurseries have been located for years right in the industrial districts, working mothers use them only as a last resort. To be sure, there is another reason for that fact; many nurseries have adopted the policy of refusing children whose parents are both working. The Nursery Boards have not yet reckoned with the fact that the largest single cause for the entrance of the mothers of young children into industry is the inadequate wage of the fathers.

Last autumn the "flu" struck our neighborhood, and both Frances and Mary came down with it. A trained nurse was added to the Manning home, while the old neighbor was subtracted from the McGuire household. When her wages stopped Mary had no money to pay for service, so she took care of herself and a sick child, with the intermittent aid of her husband. The District Nurse was kind, and in the course of two weeks Mary was dragging around the house again. Frances went to Atlantic City for her convalescence; Mary recuperated in the pickle factory where they had obligingly saved her job for her. Since then, when I see her coming home at night, I find myself indulging in the gruesome game of calculating how long she will last. Even the best will in the world is sure to break under the strain of sixteen hours of hard work daily after a severe illness.

Mary McGuire has never heard of the Equal Rights Amendment. Her rights, at present, are very few. She has all the wage and work inequalities of the average industrial woman; she must leave her children many hours a day, yet lacks resources to pay for proper care for them; she carries practically the whole burden of housework alone, in addition to her other work. "Equal Rights" is a fine phrase, and leisured women use it glibly. But the Mary McGuires in America have no use for empty phrases; they do not lower rents, nor raise wages; they pay no doctor's bills and clothe no children.

The industrial mother has all the old handicaps of the home-making mother, with the new burdens of the working woman added on. What price economic freedom for her in individualistic America today?

HELEN GLENN TYSON.

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The Road to Greenwich Village

I NEVER went to school very much—my father left me at a girl's school in Greeley Valley, Colorado, but I was only there a little while. They were awfully narrow-minded there. I told the girls some things that they weren't supposed to know—my father was a doctor and I used to read his medical books, see. I told them that a baby before it's born looks like a kind of a tadpole. Some of the girls told the teachers and the teachers bawled me out. They told me that if I ever said anything like that again I'd have to leave. The whole school was stirred up about it—and the girls I'd told that I'd been friends with, finally got to be the worst of all—they wouldn't speak to me any more. So I couldn't stand that—I left myself. I saw one of them afterwards and she told me that she was sorry, because after I had gone some of them looked it up and they found out I was right.

I was married when I was fourteen and went up to Washington. On the train when I was on my way up there, a man got in from Idaho, and when he heard I was going to Washington, he said, "You're going to Washington, are you? Well, when you've been there a little while you'll be all covered with moss—you'll have moss growing on your eyebrows and hanging out of your ears, and your hair will be all full of moss!" I didn't think that sounded very cheerful, but I went up there and I was in the woods almost fifteen years. The camp was 'way up the mountain—from where we were Mt. Rainier looked like you could just lean right over and touch it. When we first got there, we started out for the mountain in a buckboard, the driver was a man who had been hit by a limb and his nose was squashed all over his face. Pretty soon, he pointed out ahead and said, "You see that loblolly over there?" I looked out and saw a great big sheet of mud. "Well," he said, "we're goin' right through it!" And he lashed up the horses and plunged right in. When we got out I looked back and saw the poor dog that had been tied to the back of the buckboard—he was all fulla mud and almost dead. So were we. Then to go up the mountain we had to ride. I never had ridden very much and I made some big mistakes. I couldn't understand why the horse always had to go zigzag along the path and I decided I'd make him go straight—and the first thing I knew I was off on the ground rolling down the slope. The horse had stumbled on a cedar-snag—those cedar-snags are as slick as glass, you know. If I had left him alone he would have avoided them. He was what they call woodsbroke and I wasn't yet.

Well, as I say, I was up there almost fifteen years and I certainly got awfully lonesome. I almost put my eyes out reading by a lantern in the evenings. I used to sit there and hear the mice running round and round like a racetrack. The woods are fulla mice—the mice get into the walls and the skunks go in after the mice and they get fastened there. I couldn't get very many books—all they had up there was the seed catalogue and the almanac—and I had to get them brought up from the circulating library in Seattle. I read E. P. Roe's The Opening of a Chestnut Burr and He Fell in Love With His Wife—old stories about New York, you know—but I just thought they were great. I used to read them and just think it must be wonderful to live in New York. Once I cooked for a camp of sixty men where the cook had gone away. It's quite a stunt in itself to learn to cook up there. What they eat up there is sourdough—that's a kind of pancake dough that isn't affected by the cold. It's so cold up there that you can't do much with food—our Indian, Jake, used to take his bread and his bottle of potato-water to bed with him at night to keep them from freezing.

I'll never forget the first time I made bread. In the first place, they don't have any regular kind of yeast—like Fleischmann's—they only have one kind—a brand called Owl—and you have to put in about twelve cakes of that to get any results at all. I tried to knead it on a table but I couldn't do anything with it—the bottom of the pan would just clink back and forth—it was so big and weak. Finally, the old man that was there took it and put it down on the floor and went to it with his whole strength—that was the only way you could make any impression on it. What I missed most—I never thought I would—but what I missed most was a woman. I didn't see a woman for years and then when I did she was more like a man than a woman. She was a woman who had come up there with her husband, who was a Civil War veteran and had a homestead. She helped him cut the trees and everything—sure, she used to work on the business end of a cross-saw! Then he drank so that she left him and went down to Tacoma and went into business—and she bought up the tideland flats for twenty-five dollars an acre. They were just an expanse of mud then and everybody gave her the big ha-ha, but it turned out that they were valuable for machine shops—she evidently knew that—and she sold them for a lot of money. Her name was Larry Larson.

Well, when she was selling out her ranch she came over to see my husband. I couldn't take my eyes off her, I hadn't seen a woman in so long. But she didn't notice me—didn't know I was there, see. I was standing cooking potato-cakes over the fire—we didn't have any stove, we just had to cook over the blaze—and I was changing the frying-pan from hand to hand and trying to hold my face away from the fire. Pretty soon, she came over, still talking to my husband, and put on a man's old slouch hat down over her eyes, and took the frying-pan away from me and held it right out over the blaze and kept it there without ever changing hands and you ought to have seen her flip the potato-cakes over holding it out like that—still talking business all the time. Made me feel so cheap! Finally, we had a kind of a bust-up. I got tired of living up there and my husband thought I was interested in another man—but you had to be interested in something up there, and I took my boy—he was born up there—and went south again. I really guess it's only a woman like Larry Larson that can succeed up there.

I went down to Oklahoma where my father was—my father is a doctor—I don't know if he ever knew how to give anything but calomel but he certainly gave plenty of that—and the whole community down there got to be practically dependent on him—he learned by experimenting on them, too. That was in Eagletown, which is half way between Broken Bow, Oklahoma, and Dequeen, Arkansas—that's a district they call the Sticks because there's so much timber there. The country is really beautiful, they have all these yellow pines and what they call iron-wood that turns first brown and then yellow and sort of a henna-colored soil—but the people don't do anything with it. Where we were, the Choctaw Lumber Company had come in and put them to work—somebody has to do something with them—they'd just set and rock, otherwise. Each family owns a cow and if they're ambitious they have a "hawg" and they'd let it go at that. I tell you, you have to go down and live among them to believe

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that there are such people! They won't talk—all you can get out of them is "yes" and "no" and "Ah reckon." But they watch everything you do—the first morning I was there all the women hung around and watched me get washed. You ought to have seen their faces when they saw some of the things I did—they thought I was outlandish—they didn't have to do that, see! And when I brushed my teeth! They couldn't make out what it was. They don't have any toothbrushes down there—they use snuff-sticks instead. And the women would watch me from the house across the street when I got undressed at night. The only way they know to amuse themselves is to play craps—that's their diversion. My father had a mechanical piano brought down to try to entertain them and you ought to have seen the crowd around the house every night—they just stood there and stared with their mouths open. They'd never heard any music before—only just these old fiddles they have.

They played it every night for a month and I couldn't stand it any longer finally. I walked out one night and said, "Golly! I can't stand this tinned music any more!" They looked at me real sore and said, "Didja ever hear any better?" Later on, they had pictures there—in the same room that was the school and the church—but most of the older people didn't go—that was kind of new, see. I used to go and see films of New York and it would make me just wild to go there. I got in wrong with them all around—in the first place, I didn't make my boy go to church and they're all very moral—or claim to be. And they couldn't understand why I read books—if they saw me reading a book, they'd put me through a regular cross examination—they'd want to know what it was and why I wanted to read it. They didn't even read the Bible—they figured they wouldn't know about it. I read Darwin and some of Haeckel down there that my father had and The Wandering Jew by Eugene Sue—now I like to read D. H. Lawrence and Michael Arlen. And then another thing I did they didn't like was to speak to niggers I knew in the street—you're not supposed to do that—it's as much as your life is worth to speak to a nigger. I used to go out for long walks with a book and that made them very suspicious—they wanted to know why I wanted to go out for a walk alone.

Finally, they decided that I was some kind of a fancy woman, who was meeting the men in the woods—they began to talk about me like I was a menace to the town. At the same time, when I went out, the men would always follow me. There was a man with a wooden leg who used to get on my nerves—he was the most persistent of all—I used to hear his wooden leg stomping behind me wherever I went and I used to have to dodge him among the trees. Some of the men had been in the War and they'd been away and weren't quite so narrow-minded as the other people—one of them told me about how he was in an attack and he saw a German coming toward him with his thumb, which had been cut off, just hanging loose by the skin—"Ah couldn't kill him," he said, "so Ah just took him to the hospital." I asked him why he had gone into the War—"Why," he said, "Ah figgered that if we didn't go over there and git them they'd come over here and git us. That's what the newspapers said. Why? wasn't it true?" He was nice—but most of the men were the kind that tar and feather people. In fact, finally, one day I was out for a walk with an engineer, who was the only man in the community I could talk to — and we were sitting on the railroad track and all of a sudden a man jumped out of the bushes and pointed a shotgun at us and said, "What are you doing on that railroad track?" I was mad, I can tell you! I stood up and I said, "You must think we want to go some place to make love—to go out on the railroad track! But go ahead and shoot me! Here I am! You'll never have a better target!"

That was too much for me—I decided to leave and take a chance on New York. First I lived in the Bronx and that was terrible—I didn't know about the Village then. I did sewing. Now I run this little store and I like it because I always had a sort of an original taste in decorations and things. I make these blouses myself—they're not afraid of having them too bright down here. Another thing is that nobody cares what you do down here—nobody expects you to cook or to go to church—and you can always talk to interesting people. I tell you, the West is all right but it's a great relief to get some place where you can feel a little bit free. I know all about those great open spaces!

EDMUND WILSON.

Washington Notes

NO one likes to be pessimistic about any peaceful gesture made by the President of the United States toward other great nations, but for a long time these inspired newspaper stories about Mr. Coolidge's plans to call another disarmament conference—and there have been dozens of them—have sounded hollow and ridiculous to me.

Recent developments showing the extreme hostility of France to the idea and the impossbility, if such a conference should be held, of accomplishing any concrete or, for that matter, abstract, good, merely strengthen my conviction that there is at this time no clarity of thought in either State Department or White House on the subject. I know this "peace stuff," which emanates from the presidential conferences with the correspondents at what seem regular intervals, is a good political pose, but if there is force, spirit, clear-headed purpose or ordered plan back of it, then it has been most successfully concealed from those who ought to know it.

If there had been, it does seem reasonable to assume the French attitude could have been discovered by Mr. Coolidge and his Secretary of State in some more satisfactory and dignified way than through the newspapers. If it had, plans could have been changed, without publicity, and there would have been no excuse for the petulant stories from the White House, to the general effect that, because of French reluctance to confer, the President would insist upon a start in the payment of the French debt.

That sort of talk in official administration organs makes neither for peace nor international good feeling. Much as I love peace, if the conference plan should be dropped I would rejoice. Personally, I would hate to see it held, unless there were a commanding figure in the government capable of directing it well, as Mr. Hughes did the Harding conference. And, again, I do not see such a figure. Mr. Coolidge's experience with Congress does not suggest him as such a man.

Another conference about which I am deeply sceptical is that of the so-called Democratic leaders, suggested in the high-minded but long-winded letter of that leading party salvationist—Franklin D. Roosevelt. The only person who enthusiastically responded to the clarion call of Mr.

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Roosevelt, so far as I have heard, is Senator Walsh, to whom the letter was addressed, although there was later wrung from the taciturn but solvent Shaver a reluctant admission that, perhaps, the idea was not bad, and that he might call a conference some time in the fall, if that was the way everybody felt about it.

To me there is a striking similarity between the plans of this Democratic conference and the "plans" for the disarmament conference. They are both equally vague as to shape and hollow as to substance. If they were held, they would be about equally restricted as to scope and barren as to results. Nothing vital could be discussed at a party conference such as is proposed. Everybody concedes that. It would, even if it could be conducted with a complete absence of the friction and feeling that made such a shambles of the New York convention, be a perfectly platitudinous and meaningless occasion, at which would undoubtedly be unloosed a lot of the world's worst oratory. And, of course, the chance is always present that some of the same sort of verbal brickbats which Democratic senators hurled at each other at the last session might be tossed about the hall.

If, however, there were nothing in the way of the proposed Democratic conference other than the widely heralded McAdoo dinner in Kansas City on April 13, the conference promoters need not abandon their plans or lose sleep. There may be other good reasons for not conferring, but this so-called McAdoo move is not one of them. That dinner has no real bearing on the situation. It has been engineered by certain young men who were on the McAdoo payroll last year and have exceptional talents for publicity. The dinner does not mean that Mr. McAdoo will be a candidate. It does not mean that Mr. McAdoo has taken any interest in it. As a matter of fact, I am told he has not. Certainly, it does not mean that the men who counted in the McAdoo movement last time—Baruch, Chadbourne, Roper, Walsh, and others of that type—are interested or informed about the so-called McAdoo movement. I am in a position to say that the more important of these men not only are not politically interested in Mr. McAdoo now, but they are not likely to be in the future.

The dinner has already had—and will get—a lot more publicity than its size or significance justifies. However, news is scarce these days, and the recrudescence of the "McAdoo for President" idea is a palatable and welcome dish for Republican editors all over the country. It is a particularly sweet morsel for the Republican National Committee, and serves to keep the business interests of the East unshaken in their allegiance to the President.

Speaking of Democratic leaders makes one think of the "Bryan Boys," their recent visit here and their ridiculous twaddle about the future of the Democratic party depending upon its complete abandonment of New York and the East, and its consistent wooing of the West. In the first place, anyone who, at this time, can see any future at all for the Democratic party, East or West, must use a far more powerful political telescope than any of which I have ever heard before.

Secondly, when you think of the elder Bryan and his present occupation which is that of a sort of glorified barker for a super-real estate concern in Miami, you cannot help but feel the old gentleman is descending in the scale so rapidly and with so much loss of dignity, that his political advice is worth as little as it costs, which is exactly nothing at all. Any honest toil is, of course, commendable and no man is to be criticized for employing his talents for pay, if he needs the money. If Mr. Bryan needed it, there would naturally be no argument, but there does seem something cheap and tawdry about a man, reputed to be worth more than a million dollars, and whose aspirations have three times made him the presidential candidate of a great party, hiring out to a land company, and, for a salary, daily dilating to crowds of the curious upon the advantages of his employer's holdings. This is a distinct step down from the Chautauqua. Whatever he gets, it is not worth it.

Every time the new Secretary of Agriculture, Mr. Jardine, opens his mouth, he confirms the prediction I made in this place weeks prior to his nomination, that the new head of the Department would be a man whose fundamental views on farm problems are in complete accord with those of Mr. Hoover. In his public as well as his private conversations Mr. Jardine strikes the Hoover note every time, full, clear, unmistakable. Shut your eyes and forget the rasping Kansas intonation, and it is easy for anyone who has heard the Secretary of Commerce discourse on the subject to believe it is Mr. Hoover, himself, talking.

When those bureau heads in the Department, who were active in the direction of the anti-Hoover fight, so bitterly waged under the late Wallace, and since, listen, read and reflect, they must feel considerable painful anxiety as to the future. This whole business of helping the farmer, so far as the Department is concerned, is to be looked at from an angle sharply diverging from the price fixing slant of the former régime. It will infuriate some of the "farmers' friends" in House and Senate, and they will, perhaps, be strong enough, and Mr. Coolidge weak enough again to block the enactment of measures designed to carry out the Hoover-Jardine ideas—just as they did last time. That is very likely, but nothing not in harmony with those ideas can go through. And "no legislation" comes much closer to meeting the Hoover-Jardine policy of what is right and proper than it does the opposition.

I want once more to call attention to the fact, stated in this column some months ago, that the real influence at the White House isn't Butler or Stearns or Weeks or Clark or Gillet or Hoover or Sargent, but it is Dwight Morrow, of the firm of J. P. Morgan & Company.

Mr. Morrow's name does not appear among the Mayflower week-end guests, and his visits to the White House do not often get into newspapers. As a matter of fact, they are not nearly as frequent as may be supposed, but that does not prevent him from being in close touch with the President just the same. It is a fact that Mr. Coolidge has no closer friend than Mr. Morrow, nor is there anyone in whose judgment he places as much reliance or whose advice carries more weight. When you dig in a little, you find it was Mr. Morrow who provided the famous electric hobby-horse, and it was Mr. Morrow whose advice was taken in making certain changes in the furnishing of the White House, and it was Mr. Morrow who was consulted about this, and about that. This is not written by way of criticism. Mr. Morrow, everyone concedes, is an able, clean, exceptionally successful business man, who was a classmate of Mr. Coolidge and is his personal friend. Probably of all the advice available to him, Morrow's advice is the most worth taking. If the Morgan man

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knew a little more about politics and could be here more frequently, the presidential futility in Congress might be mitigated.

Mr. Morrow, as a man, is admirable enough. This is, however, the first time we have had a President with quite such a direct and close personal touch with the great "money power." The public reaction against that sort of thing lacks the violence of a few years ago. It isn't regarded as a deadly political sin any longer to know a man worth a million dollars. This is a conservative cycle. Still, when Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Morrow confer these days, they do not send for the reporters.

I am told by those whose orbits touch the "Coolidge circle" that one of the things the Republican publicity agencies will attempt to implant in the public mind this summer is the idea that the smooth and sugary Mr. Warren was a noble and uncomplaining martyr to the partisan hate of Democratic senators toward the President. It is seldom I feel a burning desire to defend the Senate, particularly the Democratic portion of it. However, I cannot refrain from stating that the effort to impress the public with the notion that the rejection of Warren was due to a partisan desire to "embarrass the President" is as utterly unjustified as it is insincere. As an excuse for the President's defeat it is absurd and unfounded, and as political propaganda it is as complete a piece of fiction as has ever been put out by the Republican National Committee, which is saying quite a lot.

There are reports here that when the Senate meets again Mr. Coolidge will send Mr. Warren's name in for another Cabinet post. Of course, these are based on the belief that Mr. Kellogg intends to resign and that Warren will succeed him. I would not be surprised if there was some truth in this talk. In the course of the Senate fight, Warren's defenders more than once charged that Democratic senators had asserted they would not have opposed him had he been named for any other place except that of Attorney-General.

Unquestionably, Mr. Coolidge would like to have Mr. Warren near him. His ability, political shrewdness and diplomatic experience all make him a valued adviser. Warren, of course, would rather be Secretary of State than anything else. By next winter, his scars should have healed sufficiently to make him ready for another fight. And regardless of what was said about not opposing him for another post, there would be another fight. You may be certain of that.

T. R. B.

Washington.

Dream-Song

Would I had met you in my days of strength,
Before my tide of life had turned, my love;
These lightning streaks, that come in fitful starts,
Are not the great forked lightnings you deserve;
Too many silver moons has my life worn
Into an old thin rim, since I was born.

What you deserve are those enchanted notes
We sing in dreams at night; so pure and sweet
That kings and queens sit down with bended heads
And listen with their crowns laid at their feet;
Those songs that pass, without a voice on earth,
And perish in the brain that gives them birth.

W. H. Davies.

TWO COMMUNICATIONS

The Scholar, His Employer and His Freedom

SIR: The superlative ingenuity of your editorial of March 11 on the recent conference on principles of academic freedom and tenure is calculated to make a participant in that conference wonder if he is perhaps reading a gentle essay on the League of Nations by an irreconcilable senator.

You say, indeed, this is "not a flippant perversion of the sensible proposals of serious and responsible people." Without wishing to insist on the adjective I find this statement not quite convincing.

In the conference (at which I had the honor to preside), the Association of American Colleges was represented by Dean Effinger of the University of Michigan; the Association of American Universities by Dean Lloyd of the same institution; the Association of University Professors by its president, Professor Leuschner of the University of California and two former chairmen of its committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure—Prof. F. S. Deibler of Northwestern University and Prof. A. O. Lovejoy of Johns Hopkins University. Aren't these (not to mention others) "serious and responsible people" and is it conceivable that the proposals which they thought sensible admit of no other interpretation than your own or "complete nonsense"?

Those who have had most to do with the investigations conducted by committees of the Association of University Professors have looked forward for years to the time when the essentially critical process of investigation *after* the abuse, might be replaced by preventive measures in advance, if only agreement could be reached as to definitions, principles and procedure between the administrative agencies and the representative of our Association. Toward such agreement there has been gradual and encouraging convergence. The recent conference, under the auspices of the American Council on Education, was an effort to determine how nearly such an agreement had been, or could be, reached.

It was a source of real gratification to the participants that they were able to agree—not on a definitive statement, of course, but on a provisional working definition to which appeal can be made either by an administration, unreasonably criticized or by a teacher, unfairly treated. Whether the terms of the agreement are all that could be wished is doubtless a matter for legitimate debate. But the assumption that the worst possible construction which an ingenious imagination can devise ought to be put upon every phrase, seems a trifle hasty. It must be evident to anyone who reads even the incomplete text published in the New Republic that if this agreement should be generally adopted by American colleges and universities, and should be reasonably construed and honestly applied there would be set up such safeguards as have never yet existed in America for freedom of thought and teaching within the university, and for the freedom of the teacher in his civic activities outside it. The ultimate test of the value of the agreement lies in future experience of its working, concerning which I take the liberty of suggesting the advantage of a certain open-mindedness—and even a little good will.

H. W. Tyler,
Secretary, the American Association of University Professors.

Cambridge, Mass.

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SIR: Apropos of your recent editorial on Is a Scholar an Employe? I wish to observe that the "scholar" is and must of necessity be an employe as long as the American college and university are organized and conducted as they now are. If the scholar and his colleagues are not the university—and they are not—and if a group of non-resident laymen are the university—as they are—what status is left for the professor, except that of an employe? The report of the American Council on Education which defines the status of the scholar takes it for granted that he is an employe. . . .

There need be no discussion on this point; the scholar connected with the university is an employe, possibly a peculiar kind of a hired man. But he is "under contract" with a corporation known as the university, a corporation of which neither he nor his colleagues are a part and over which they have no control. You are quite right in pointing out that such a status denies to the scholar any real liberty. You are correct in saying that the liberties and guarantees which are ostensibly granted to the scholar by the convention of the National Council on Education cannot be genuine, if he is to be relegated to the position of an employe. Obviously too, as you suggest, the professor cannot remain a true scholar and do the work which society demands and must have from him if he is to be given permanently the position of an hireling. But you have not offered a remedy for this predicament in which the scholar is found. . . .

Conceding as you seem to do the right of the president to call the professor to his sanctum and give him a "wigging," you have given away the whole case of the professor. Not until the president's "sanctum" is the office of a man who holds his commission from the faculties, the resident officers of the university, and not from a non-resident group of men, strangers to the work and world of the professors, can the professor be anything else than an employe. He is not the university; the board of trustees, regents, governors or what not are the university, and as such they must hold the professor responsible. Morally, popularly considered, the professor and his group may be viewed as the responsible university. To the lay mind, to the uninitiated it may appear that a university is not other, neither more nor less, than its faculties. But in this the public are mistaken, in so far as American universities are concerned. The professors are not the university. The lay board is the university. The professor is their employe.

Such is the theory and such is the practice. The conventions proposed by the American Council on Education can make no more favorable status for the professor than that of an employe as long as the layman and not the professor is the university. How this condition came about is a long story and this is not the place to recite it. Suffice it to say that no single person and no single generation is to be blamed for it. Moreover, there have been in the past and now are certain good reasons why the official, responsible board of the college and university should be made up of a group of non-resident and non-professional people.

The question remains: How can the professor in the American university be other than an employe? If it is true, as an increasing number of thoughtful people seem to think, that the status of employe for the professor is fatal to scholarship, to science and to the leadership of the university, what other status can be given him? How can he be made a free man and, like other professional men, responsible directly to his constituency?

First, the professor and his colleagues might be incorporated and made the legal custodians of the property and the responsible legislators and administrators. If this be objected to as revolutionary and impracticable we will only remark that it was thus that the first two colleges in the United States were organized and conducted for the first hundred or more years of their history and it is thus that all universities of Christendom are conducted, except in the northern part of North America....

But there are other ways, evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Let the state, or the governing boards give to the professor the right to name the officers of administration. Let them determine the tenure of deans and president. Make the administrative staff responsible to the teaching staff and your professor is no longer an employe in fact, whatever he may be in theory.

Again, let the faculties come into frequent and formal relations with the governing board through joint committees. Let the experienced professional men of the university, the people who face the problems of the class room and the campus, the people who morally and intellectually are the university, sit down with the people who are charged with the authority of the institution, and the result will soon be that the men who know will lead the men who do not know about the university.

The professor will remain a hired man as long as the president is the agent of an absentee board and not the presiding officer of a board of peers. Our governing boards cannot govern. They must employ an agent, the president, who thus becomes the one responsible man. He may ask for the advice of the men of the faculty, he may even call them "colleagues." He may say as one noted president of a state university did recently, "I need your help, I want your advice, but you are to understand that I must do as I darn please." And so he must, as long as he alone is responsible for the policy and its administration and as long as he must give an account of his stewardship not to the resident officers but to non-residents. . . .

J. E. KIRKPATRICK.

Olivet, Mich.

[What the conventions on academic freedom and academic tenure are, which are here under discussion, every reader can now ascertain himself. They are available in full in the February Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors, obtainable from the secretary, Professor Tyler, at 222 Charles River Road, Cambridge, Massachusetts, for thirty-five cents.

What they mean everyone must decide for himself. They seem to us to mean pretty much what they say, being clear and unambiguous. In the first group freedom of utterance is assured to the professor as his rightful possession. But anything less is unthinkable. The question is what constitutes freedom of utterance? The professor receives guarantees of something or of nothing, according to the definition. The explicit definition meticulously confines the professor's free utterances to his special subject. What a "special subject" is goes without definition. After noting that "special subject" either does confine the professor or does not, and that if it does not the exercise of definition exhibited here turns out to be fruitless, we conclude that the whole point to these conventions on academic freedom is to serve notice on the professor that his freedom is guaranteed only within the strict limits of the paddock assigned to him by the administration and indicated by the college catalogue.

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In the second group the security of tenure of the professor is defined. The professor is advised that he need expect nothing beyond the execution of the written bond but reasonable notice of dismissal. But the burning issue is whether, and for what, and by what means, his incumbency can be terminated before his time is up. For all ordinary causes, he is assured, he may not be discharged without a hearing before his peers and their advisory concurrence. But, after all, it is not ordinary causes that need to be considered. The question is really whether administrative officers possess extraordinary powers by which they can dismiss professors for extraordinary causes when extraordinary situations have arisen. Upon this point the professor is advised they have and they can. Such extraordinary causes are "treason" or "gross immorality" upon the part of the professor. These crimes are not defined. Neither is the professor given, by these conventions, any rights to compel a definition or a bill of charges or any sort of hearing from an administrative officer who proposes to remove him for "treason." Upon the plain statement of these conventions, any professor may be removed by any president who chooses to regard his utterances or conduct as "treasonable" or "grossly immoral."

This is what these conventions seemed to us to convey. Our opinion of them, expressed in an editorial in the New Republic for March 11, was that as safeguards for the professor they are flatly unsatisfactory. We are now told by the chairman of the Conference which drew them up that we have misconceived their meaning. What, in that case, their meaning can be we are not informed. Our opinion must therefore remain unchanged.

Indeed the fact that such conventions as these could be drawn by a group of professors and then recommended for adoption upon the authority of their eminence must be our one reply to the proposals of Professor Kirkpatrick. As we remarked editorially, authority seems to engender a psychology of its own more or less independent of the previous attitudes of the men who have received it. It is that psychology, the attitude not of presidents as individuals but of "responsible authority" as an institution, against which the professor needs to be safeguarded.

But as Miss Mary Van Kleeck pointed out in her letter, published in the New Republic of March 25, the interests of free scholarship can be promoted more successfully, because more positively, through standards for promotion than through safeguards against dismissal. The study of standards of appointment and promotion which the American Council on Education is to make, at the suggestion of this Conference, is doubtless much more important than these conventions—provided that these conventions are not universally adopted and acted upon. But we assume that they will not be.—THE EDITORS.]

CORRESPONDENCE

Liberalism and the Protocol

SIR: Three final words to Professor Frankfurter:

1. The Protocol does not close any *legal* door to the revision of Treaties that is open in the Covenant. The Article provided for this purpose is XIX. The Protocol leaves it unchanged. It would take me too long to argue why I cannot accept Professor Frankfurter's and the London Nation's new and ingenious suggestion that Articles XII-XV could be so used in their present form and not in their amended form.

2. The Protocol is designed to bring into existence the state of mind in which it will be possible for the parties concerned to agree on the revision of the 1919 or any other treaties that may stand in need of it. Professor Frankfurter seems more inclined to encourage the very different state of mind so vividly described in Rebecca West's article on Hungary in your issue of March 11:

> This everlasting chatter about boundaries and la revanche and indifference to the bad blood that it may stir up consumes the energies of the country [Hungary].

3. The events of the last week have brought into clear relief the nature of the forces aligned against the policy of the Protocol. It will not succumb to them.

ALFRED ZIMMERN.

New York, N. Y.

The Workers' Education Movement

SIR: The Workers' Education Bureau, the Labor College and the Central Labor Union of Philadelphia invite your readers in this territory to attend the Fourth National Convention of the Workers' Education Bureau of America on April 17, 18 and 19, (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) to get acquainted with workers' education as it is being developed in this country. Much progress has been made in this field in the past two years and your readers will have the opportunity at the convention of getting acquainted with this new angle in education, operated and managed by Labor itself.

President William Green of the American Federation of Labor will address the convention, as will others, educators especially, who are interested in this field. The main features of the program will be broadcast. Labor is going in for workers' education in real style, and your readers will have the chance of seeing the movement in action at this convention.

E. J. LEVER,
Secretary, Labor College of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, Penn.

Contributors

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EDWARD A. WIECK is a coal miner who has worked in various coal fields of this country, and is now employed at an Illinois mine.

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LEO PASVOLSKY, a member of the staff of the Institute of Economics, Washington, D. C., is a well-known writer on international economic problems.

HELEN GLENN TYSON, a graduate student in psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, was headworker of the social service department at the University of Pennsylvania Hospital. Her State Survey of Day Nurseries (made for the Department of Welfare) has just been published.

W. H. DAVIES has had varied experience as a tramp in America, a worker on cattle-boats, a street-singer in England. He has written many volumes of poems, Child Lovers, A Song of Life, The True Traveller, and others, and one volume of prose, The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp.

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The New
REPUBLIC

Spring Book Section

Read American First

What of It? by Ring Lardner. *New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.*

YOU are an intelligent American, dear reader, and so we can talk to you as man to man. You read your Dickens and Thackeray and Scott, or they were read to you as a child, you left high school with honors and a reputation as half back, you went to college, avoided serious trouble with the dean, read some Flaubert, Dostoevsky and Oscar Wilde, mowed the lawn during vacations, went back again in October to a pleasant salad of government, history of art, sociology and French literature, and entered the American scene through the side door of one of the learned professions, to which you brought some knowledge, a little taste, and a strong feeling that the people you met were unequally divided between those who were acutely aware that they were living in America and those who merely lived there. You were an American, to be sure, and in a vague way proud of it, but at the same time you knew better. You wanted a different America. Perhaps you wanted it to be more like Europe, perhaps your reading or travels had implanted in you a yearning for more ivy, soirées, peasants and cynicism, but at any rate you were discontented, and believed that if there were more people about you who shared your own feeling of maladjustment, things would improve. It turned out, as time went on, that there were many after all who felt just as you did. Novels and magazines and plays and articles began to pour from them, and you read them and joined the movement. The movement, however, cared little about exploration, and a great deal about exposure. It was in the hands of people who had a point to prove, and who found ever so much material suitable to their purpose. They had only to look up and down the street, throw away the mail, open the paper, and a procession of silly headlines, an army of four-flushers, salesmen, boosters, yes-and-no men, morons, realtors and spiritual hicks rushed down their fountain pens straight into your favorite reading-matter. There were other things and men to look at too, but they lay beneath the surface, and when one's feeling of being in a minority has dethroned amusement in favor of scorn, digging beneath the surface comes hard.

The surface of American life screams at us all day long, and through the din it is very difficult to catch the real human undertones. No wonder the "intelligent American" ends by believing that we are all painfully alike; no wonder he clings to the writers who pillory the fatuous monotony and feed him rich, juicy ridicule until his uneasiness fattens into a philosophy. No wonder he feels like an exile among incomprehensible, barbarous natives, and seeks the society of the other exiles. He was born in this country, yet it is not his, he has not made it what it has become, he cannot remake it nearer his desire; the natives, like Chinamen, all begin to look alike to him, he cannot even speak their language, and expressmen call him "professor."

In order to find out whether or not the state of exile in such an individual is incurable, give him some Ring Lardner to read. He will wonder why ("Ring Lardner is a humorist, I'm told. Doesn't he write stories about baseball players?"), and he will dip into You Know Me Al with supercilious curiosity. If he doesn't read to the end, or doesn't laugh, or can't understand the talk, there's little or no hope for him, and he had better be allowed to continue and end his days in exile. But if he comes back for more, then there's hope for him, and more reading of the same kind will make him realize he's a native after all, and bring him back to America. For Ring Lardner is the most thoroughly American writer we have today, and one of the most American we have ever had.

Just what does that mean: an American writer? One, first of all, who is not too conscious of the fact that he is

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writing about America, who does not investigate his neighbors, nor lump them all together as Americans, seeking to find their likenesses rather than their differences; one who is not trying to "interpret," or to satirize, or to correct, or to divide them into species of one great peculiar genius; one who writes about people rather than Americans. One who accepts the country so completely that he does even know he is accepting it. One who sees America, not as a country full of tendencies, types, curiosities, weaknesses, but simply a place full of people, all of them interesting when you get to know them well. And he can also write about these people in their own language.

It is not one language, which can be learned from a book or by going about from state to state. Perhaps no other language is richer or more variable. It changes from one part of the country to another, in words, in accent, in intonation. It changes from class to class, and there are hundreds of classes, each shading off into the next. It changes according to occupation also, and no other country has more people who have traveled far from where they began, who have had dozens of occupations, who have moved about from one class to another, in no country are there to be found more subtle differences in language from individual to individual. The two business men you meet on a train sound alike at first, but if you listen carefully you will hear differences and shadings that come from the fact that one of them went to high school, while the other did not, that one of them has been an automobile mechanic and the other likes to play poker, that one of them makes socks and the other loose-leaf notebooks, that one of them reads headlines and the other the Saturday Evening Post, that one of them married a Californian, the other a girl from Massachusetts, that one of them has several children, alive and talking, while the other has no children but goes to a great many conventions. And they will talk differently again, using fragments of other personal dialects, according to whether they are calm or excited, drunk or sober. For every individual, aside from the idiosyncracy of what he actually says, there is a brand of talk which he uses and which is the only right talk to put into his mouth if you are writing a story about him.

Ring Lardner knows this instinctively. There is nobody else writing about Americans who knows even half as well as he what talk sounds natural in this or that particular mouth. If he has been able or chosen to speak, so far, only about a dozen different languages when there remain so many thousands of others, still, this is far more than any other American writer can command. And when Ring Lardner speaks one of these languages through one of his characters he does so without a trace of accent. The one he has used oftenest, and for which he is most famous, is the talk of the ball player Jack Keefe in You Know Me Al. Jack is a good-hearted, boastful, simple-minded pitcher who breaks into the big league. He always has an alibi, his leg is there for anybody to pull, and almost anybody can kid the life out of him. But Ring Lardner never kids him himself. He lets Jack talk, and stays in the background. And so Jack always keeps in character. There are few, if any, realler characters in American fiction today. Temptations to new slang, to the invention of slang, are tremendous, but Jack never uses any slang or any talk but his own, and it remains absolutely his own to the end. Even the wildest deceptions practised on him, even the most foolish alibis he offers, ring true because of the consistency of his character and his talk.

Besides being a first rate character sketch and a remarkable creation in the American language, You Know Me Al was also extremely funny, one of those few books which makes you laugh out loud. Most people enjoyed the fun so much to the exclusion of the characterization and language that Ring Lardner found that he was expected to be first of all a humorist, and other things incidentally. So we have The Real Dope, an inferior sequel to You Know Me Al, in which Jack Keefe goes to France as a soldier and has his leg pulled every few pages. The talk is just as good, but the character not nearly so real, and the invention runs a little thin. The Big Town, while written basically in the same language, is a very able piece of work, in which the characters are as real, if a little burlesqued, and the talk just as subtly true to those characters, as in You Know Me Al. Husband, wife and sister-in-law inherited some money and have come from South Bend to New York to marry off sister-in-law. There is a good deal of farce, and a hurried unsatisfactory end, but the kidding and the talk remain in key. It is broader than You Know Me Al, more pungent, more in the line of the old fashioned American exaggeration. Daley is talking to Katie.

> "I ain't never tried to handle the fair sex and I don't know if I could or not. But I've just met one that I think could handle me." And he give her a look that you could pour on a waffle.

There is behind all the wise-cracks and good fun of The Big Town a curiously sardonic undertone all the stranger and more original for being mixed with irresponsible light heartedness. In Ring Lardner's last two books this quality is more pronounced—but let us take them one by one. How to Write Short Stories, published last summer, remains far and away his best work. Here he is not trying too hard to be humorous, and in two or three stories trying to do something very different from anything he has done before. The bitter veracity of The Champion is a thousand miles from Jake Keefe, busher and bonehead. It is the only story of his I know not written in some shading of the American language overheard and recreated. A straight-out, narrow, cold, ferocious and memorable wallop. The other stories are written in the language of one or both characters. Some Like Them Cold is a masterpiece, and shows better than anything else Ring Lardner's conquest of American talk, and through that, of American people. A man and a girl are writing to each other. The story is quite simple, the difference between the characters and their changing feelings very subtle, very difficult to do well. At the end one is not quite sure that the correspondence of two real people has not been laid open. Best of all is The Golden Honeymoon, in another kind of talk. Two old people go south on a long deferred honeymoon. The old man tells the story. He talks like this:

> Our train pulled out of Washington at 9:40 P. M. and Mother and I turned in early, I taking the upper. During the night we passed through the green fields of old Virginia, though it was too dark to tell if they was green or what color. When we got up in the morning, we was at Fayetteville, North Carolina. We had breakfast in the dining car and after breakfast I got in conversation with the man in the next compartment to ours. He was from Lebanon, New Hampshire, and a man about eighty years of age.

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His wife was with him, and two unmarried daughters and I made the remark that I should think the four of them would be crowded in one compartment, but he said they had made the trip every winter for fifteen years and knowed how to keep out of each other's way. He said they was bound for Tarpon Springs.

We reached Charleston, South Carolina, at 12:50 P. M., and arrived at Savannah, Georgia, at 4:20. We reached Jacksonville, Florida, at 8:45 P. M. and had an hour and a quarter to lay over there. . . .

At first one enjoys the genial flatness. At the end one has seen two whole lives, sad and homely and humorous and isolated. And this author lets the old man talk and tell the whole story, without ever interrupting.

This last volume, coming so soon after an example of what Ring Lardner could really do in The Golden Honeymoon, is disappointing. The definite attempt to do different kinds of stories, most of them magnificently successful each in its own key, has given way to a rather aimless collection of short pieces, funny in spots, but thin, a little forced and restless, to facetious editorials, to bright ideas, to a rather mediocre account of a trip to Europe in no particular language. But in the middle of the volume are three short nonsense plays utterly unlike anything he has ever done, funnier than anything he has ever done. Mad, wild, gorgeous nonsense. They belong to that rare category of nonsense which is ruined by being read aloud because of the uncontrollable convulsions of the reader and the audience. One attempt to read aloud I Gaspiri (The Upholsterers) puts Ring Lardner well up in the front rank of the nonsense makers.

But these plays are happy accidents. Ring Lardner remains the Lardner of You Know Me Al and The Golden Honeymoon, the writer closest of all to America and its innumerable, different, amusing, pathetic people, speaking each his little variation of an unlearnable language.

ROBERT LITTELL.

Sinclair Lewis

Arrowsmith, by Sinclair Lewis. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.

IN Arrowsmith, as in Main Street and Babbitt, Sinclair Lewis is interesting chiefly as a social critic, but this has never been his only interest. He is a recorder as well as a critic of society; he is, after all, at least at times, a novelist; and he is the product as well as the critic of the society which he depicts. When I call him the "product" of it, I mean that he has gone through it and willy-nilly has been affected by it. To reproduce American society, to point out its faults, and to illustrate the effect of this society on a writer who grows up in it—this, surely, is to possess significance. Arrowsmith, like its predecessors, has all these elements of interest, but in somewhat different proportions. It pictures and it satirizes American life; its main interest, however, lies in the parallel which it suggests with the author's own life—in that it shows how the American environment affects the creative spirit. Of this theme Sinclair Lewis's whole works may be taken as in a sense illustrations.

Martin Arrowsmith is a physician who becomes a bacteriologist. Before he finally takes refuge in the wilds of Vermont where he can pursue his researches undisturbed, he encounters all the difficulties which the United States puts in the way of a doctor and an investigator who would like to be honest; he struggles with the commercialism of the medical school, the quackery which thrives in the country, the politics and fraud of a Department of Public Health in a small city, the more refined commercialism of a metropolitan clinic, and the social and financial temptations of a great institute for research. He is offered every possible inducement to prostitute himself to an easy success—manifest, worldly success. Nor is he indifferent to the pressures which are brought to bear on him; on the contrary, being a scientist by instinct rather than by reasoned conviction, he wins out in spite of himself. He would like to succeed, he has been contaminated by the success-worship with which he is surrounded, but he is unable to cope with an ineluctable honesty and stubborn drive in himself. In the end he succumbs to his own integrity.

To describe Arrowsmith as an attack on the medical profession is utterly inadequate. It is an attack on the United States. It is the story of any scientist, or any seeker for the truth—chemist, economist, historian, philosopher, theologian. Nor does it differ essentially from the story of the artist, of whatever species. It tells, in short, the troubles and obstacles met by all those who in this practical land of ours prefer, in Aristotle's terms, the theoretic to the active life, or, in equivalent terms, the creative to the acquisitive, or the contemplative to the practical, life. It deals therefore with the most important theme, in my opinion, of all afforded by American life, and with one of the crucial questions of the ages. The quarrel is a persistent one, because it grows from a fundamental opposition btween two types of people; the type on the one hand that cares only for getting on—for making good, for succeeding—and the type on the other that cares less for mere personal advancement and more for taking in the experiences of the journey and for asking "Why?" and "Whither?" The former type, the practical, is opposed to all those disinterested activities which disregard the main chance—the pursuit of knowledge and beauty for their own sake, the wish to investigate or to enjoy—which to the second type constitute the reasons for existence. Practical men, one might say, care only to exploit their environment; theoretic or contemplative men care only to get acquainted with it, to explore and realize and experience it as fully as possible. No one, I suppose, would deny that so far the practical men have had things pretty much their own way in this country—and what they have done with it Lewis has shown in Main Street and Babbitt.

There is no need of rehearsing in detail the panoramas of Gopher Prairie and of Zenith. Every one is familiar with their ugliness, dullness, hypocrisy, complacency, intolerance, standardization, conformity, inner emptiness, and discontent. Such is the society inevitably produced by whole-hearted devotion to making good, with a corresponding hostility to all activities which by their disinterestedness might interfere with that aim—a society in which science, art, and religion are prostituted and made bond-slaves to practical success, in which poetry becomes heartening doggerel, orchestras are valued as municipal advertisements, and prayer is found to conduce to prosperity. Furthermore, it is a society which stunts and thwarts and starves all who are not in accord with its ethos, which produces Raymie Wutherspoons, Guy Pollocks, Chump Frinks, and Paul Rieslings. Of this society Arrowsmith also, though less exclusively satirical, is a satire, a national gallery of frauds and fakes; it contains, one might say, all Main Street and all Babbitt, and much more besides. It too will be in-

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valuable to the future historian of the United States for its close observation and minute detail. Being a vertical rather than a horizontal view, it cuts across all strata of American life except that of the manual laborer, and is therefore more inclusive and more varied than the earlier books. Moreover, having a more sharply defined point of view, it is more positive, and it goes deeper, concerning itself less with the surface and more with a fundamental trait of the national character. It gains enormously from centering its focus, not on the exponents of social aberrations, but on an antagonist and to some extent a victim of them.

The chief importance of Arrowsmith, then, is that it shows the extreme difficulty of pursuing the creative or theoretic life in the United States. Furthermore, I should like to suggest that it establishes its thesis in two ways—not only by telling the story of its hero, but also by illustrating that of its author. As a writer Lewis has some curious traits, of which the most striking is his tendency to mimic or to imitate, to give a representation of reality which is the literary equivalent of glass flowers, Mme. Tussaud's waxworks, and barnyard symphonies. Closely allied are his dependence on his own experience and the care with which he gets up subjects, as he has got up medicine and bacteriology for Arrowsmith. All these characteristics, indeed, are abundantly manifested in his latest book; yet Arrowsmith is also the best proof that Lewis is capable of creative writing. It is much more of a novel than Main Street or Babbitt; in characterization, for instance, it is greatly superior. Leora, Martin's first wife, is by general consent Lewis's masterpiece in the creation of character. Not only is she likable, but she is indubitably real; though she is portrayed casually and without effort, no other character I know of in modern American fiction equals her in absolute final reality. And Martin suffers only in comparison with Leora; although far more difficult than either Carol or Babbitt, he is more understandingly and more successfully portrayed. Yet Martin is primarily a type, and reminds one of the preference which Lewis has shown in all his novels for types rather than individuals. It is characteristic of Lewis to care more for the representative of a class than for a single human being as a human being; even Leora interests him less than his typical fakirs in Arrowsmith. That may be why in general he contents himself with an external treatment of his characters, rarely manifesting much insight or sympathy or strength of feeling.

All these traits seem to point to a poverty of invention or of imagination—which in turn may be traceable to the influence of Lewis's environment. The growth of a creative mind is a dark and obscure subject, but the guess may be hazarded that the food on which the creative mind is nourished is experience and that a practical society operates in various ways to deprive it of that food. For one thing, the sensuous and æsthetic, the intellectual, above all the social experience which presumably is most vital to a novelist's development is simply not there—not in Gopher Prairie, for instance—to be had. But of even graver consequence is the effect of such surroundings on the artist's outlook or attitude. He needs to be receptive, to welcome experience, to be willing and able to surrender and abandon himself to it, forgetful of himself and absorbed by it. The fatal thing for him is to repel it, to be on his guard against it. But to wholly practical people any impractical person is ridiculous, possibly dangerous; and by their hostility they evoke in him an answering hostility; they make him assume a defensive attitude toward his environment. Yet for him to do so, for him to resist experience, is suicidal; unless he can let go and freely yield himself to it, his mind is denied its proper nutriment and cannot grow and mature to its full strength. This want of inner substance in turn may entail further consequences; it may lead to self-distrust, to undue self-consciousness, to a lack of integrity which appears as an unsettled, unstable point of view, to the assumption of alien standards in lieu of authentic personal standards. Besides developing a generally defensive attitude, an artist in a practical society, a society like that portrayed in Main Street, Babbitt, and Arrowsmith, is almost certain to return scorn for scorn, to seek an escape in the refuge of easy romanticism, or to try to deny his own nature and conform to the prevailing opinions.

Every point in the preceding could be profusely illustrated from the writings of Sinclair Lewis. For example, there is that uncanny knack of observation which enables him to mimic or to imitate so exactly to the life: this observation is as watchful as that of a wild animal on the lookout for its foes or as that of a Red Indian in the enemy's country. There is also his keen eye for inconsistencies or weaknesses in his prey—how quickly he pounces! Years of malicious scrutiny must have gone to the making of his last three volumes. Such observation is but one sign of a defensive attitude, an attitude which is also betrayed in the precautions he takes lest his readers misjudge him. He makes greater use of irony as a defensive weapon than any other writer I know of; he early made the discovery that if only he were ironical and showed that he knew better, he could be as romantic and sentimental and playful as he pleased. He writes as if always conscious of a hostile audience. He takes needless pains to make clear that he is more sophisticated than his characters, as if there were danger of our identifying him with them. He makes fun of their ingenuous enthusiasms, even when these enthusiasms have the best of causes. The result of it all is that he often seems unduly afraid of giving himself away.

In this respect he resembles his characters; nothing in them is more striking than their morbid self-consciousness. Only Will Kennicott and Leora are free from it. The others are always wondering what people will think, always suspecting that they are the objects of observation and comment—and in Lewis's novels they are generally right. They are constantly posing and pretending, for the benefit even of waiters and elevator-boys. They do not dare to be natural; they are self-distrustful, uncertain, and insecure. They are self-analytical, and self-contemptuous for their lack of sincerity; yet they continue to pose to themselves, adopting one attitude after another. They have no inner standards of their own, because they are not integral personalities—they have not, in fact, developed any real personality at all.

Lewis himself shifts his point of view so often that finally we come to wonder whether he has any. One of the great advantages of Arrowsmith over its forerunners is that in it there begins to emerge an almost established point of view. Otherwise, one would be inclined to call Lewis a man of multiple personality—save that all these personalities have a look of being assumed for effect. All the Lewises are disdainful of each other. When he has been romantic, he throws in a jibe at sentiment lest we think him sentimental; when he has been cynical, he grows tender lest he be thought hard; when he has been severe with a member of the Babbittry, he emphasizes the virtues of the common people and the absurdities of highbrows and social leaders. All his manifold attitudes, however, may be reduced to two

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basic ones: he is a romanticist, and he is a philistine—each bitterly satirical of the other. That is to say, he has tried to escape from his environment, and he has tried, with more success, to conform to it.

His romanticism is of two kinds. In the first place, there is in him much of the conventional romanticist and even of the sentimentalist. He has said of himself that he is "known publicly as a scolding corn-belt realist, but actually (as betrayed by the samite-yclad, Tennyson-and-water verse which he wrote when he was in college) a yearner over what in private he probably calls 'quaint ivied cottages.'" This is the Lewis who sympathizes with Carol in her dislike of Gopher Prairie and in her longing for "a reed hut built on fantastic piles above the mud of a jungle river," and who invents for Babbitt a dream of a fairy child playmate, "more romantic than scarlet pagodas by a silver sea." There is no essential difference between this romanticist and the more conspicuous one who has taken a tip from Arnold Bennett and gone in for the romance of the commonplace, although the latter despises the former. To establishing the strangeness and beauty of humdrum life Lewis devoted his first four books; he undertook to prove in Our Mr. Wrenn that a clerk's life in a Harlem flat is more romantic than travel in foreign lands, and in The Job that a stenographer is more romantic than Clytemnestra. This process is really no less an escape from reality than is the old-fashioned romance, for it consists, not in bringing out the essential quality and verity of ordinary life, but in casting a glamor over it and falsifying and sentimentalizing and prettifying it. The last three novels look as if most of the romance had worn off the commonplace, but there are traces of it, even in Arrowsmith.

Closely akin to the romanticist of the second sort is the Lewis who speaks as a man of the soil, one of the common herd, a Babbitt; he points out the essential goodness of small towns and their inhabitants and of boosters; he is homey and folksy, and strongly opposed to people whom he suspects of thinking that they are "superior." This side of Lewis is especially pronounced in the novels which preceded Main Street; long passages in them are sheer glorifications of Main-Streetism and of Babbittry. His whole tendency, when in this mood, is to strengthen and entrench the folk of Zenith and Gopher Prairie in their self-satisfaction and intolerance. In short, he is a philistine. He has not escaped contamination, he has partially conformed to his environment. He speaks, for example, its language. His technique of raillery he has learned from Sam Clark and Vergil Gunch; he merely turns their type of wit and humor back upon themselves; all his satire is a long tu quoque. His irony and sarcasm are of the showy variety popular on Main Street and in the Zenith Athletic Club. His style is founded on the uses of salesmanship, publicity, and advertising. He avails himself of all the tricks of a crack reporter to give a fillip to jaded attention. His people do not run, they "gallop"; instead of speaking, they "warble" or "gurgle" or "carol"; commonplace folk are "vanilla-flavored"; interior decorators are "daffodilic young men," "achingly well-dressed"; dancing becomes "the refined titillations of communal embracing." No wonder Lewis has sold satire to the nation—he has made it attractive with a coat of brilliant if inexpensive varnish. The excellence of his rare intervals of real writing is lost in the general glare.

For there are such intervals; and they bring us back to Lewis, the artist, by no means insensible to beauty or devoid of the tragic sense of life. Save for bits of description and scattered passages, this Lewis was largely obscured in Main Street and Babbitt; yet no doubt he helped lend animus to the satire of that society which is so fatal to artists. Certainly to him the credit is due for Arrowsmith, the story of a man who would rather find out about things than make good. Yet even Arrowsmith, though an artist's as well as a scientist's book, is the work of a mangled artist. Perhaps after all it is better so: Lewis's romanticism and philistinism and vulgarity of style make him powerful because they make him popular. The attack on American practicality needs its shock troops—could we afford to give up so effective a critic for a better writer? Perhaps it is worth spoiling an artist to have him take so salutary a revenge. Lewis is the most successful critic of American society because he is himself the best proof that his charges are just.

T. K. WHIPPLE.

The Artist of the Trade Unions

Seventy Years of Life and Labor, by Samuel Gompers. 2 vols. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $10.

A YOUNG leader of a lost cigar-makers' strike found himself blacklisted, unable to get a job for more than four months. He had a wife and five children; a baby was expected soon. Their dinner consisted of soup made of flour, water, salt and pepper. An agent called in his absence and offered the young wife $30 a week if her husband would give up the union and return to work. She indignantly refused. One day when the husband was out looking for a job the new baby was born. The doctor paid by the workmen's benefit society could not be found. The husband rushed to the office of another, who refused to come because he was not paid in advance. "I put my hand on his coat collar and said, 'You will come now with me or you will never make another move.'" The doctor came, and eventually he got his money. Because things like this happened to young Sam Gompers, he knew the meaning of strikes, blacklists, unemployment.

> New York was vividly cosmopolitan with depths in its life that few understood. There were soldiers from the red-shirted army of Garibaldi; German "forty-eighters"; English Chartists, men of big souls and high principles; the carbonari of Italy; the home-rulers of Ireland; revolutionaries from Denmark, Austria, Russia. In the early seventies New York looked like Paris during the Commune. Each ebb in the forward tide of revolution in Europe brought additions to the rebel group in New York.

Gompers read Karl Marx, he read the Communist Manifesto. He went to meetings, debated in cafés, discussed with the workers in the cigar factory. Ferdinand Laurell, to whom the book is dedicated, warned him against Lassallean theorizing and instilled in his mind the fundamental necessity of economic organization. Still things were not clear; he went on with the crowd, and took part in the eight-hour parade of 1871 when 25,000 men marched with provocative banners.

There came the depression and unemployment of 1873. Agitation grew, eventually a great demonstration was arranged in Tompkins Square. But the simple protest of the

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worker was taken up and given expression by the doctrinaire revolutionists, who issued inflammatory literature. "Propaganda was for them the chief end of life. They were perfectly willing to use human necessity as propaganda material. Practical results meant nothing in their program. They were young heroes, determined to play a great part, hence they were unwilling to do the unostentatious, quiet, orderly things that make for constructive progress." The authorities took fright; mounted police charged the crowds, beating men, women and children. A period of extreme repression and espionage followed:

> I saw how professions of radicalism and sensationalism concentrated all the forces of organized society against a labor movement and nullified in advance normal, necessary activity. I saw that leadership in the labor movement could safely be intrusted only to those into whose hearts and minds had been woven the experiences of earning their bread by daily labor.

Gompers plunged into the "unostentatious, quiet, orderly" task of building up his trade-union. It had been the custom for the workers in any shop to strike on the spur of the moment, simply by following any member who left his bench as a protest. In order to control the strike weapon and use it more wisely, a rule was adopted that no strike could be called without the authorization of the executive committee. In the shop where his brother worked, intolerable sanitary conditions existed. One morning the workers suddenly walked out as protest, and then sent a delegation to the executive committee for approval. Much to the surprise and anger of Gompers's brother the sanction was refused and the workers ordered back. Back they went, and while still at their benches again asked strike sanction. This time it was granted, the strike occurred in regular order and the condition was remedied. Thus the lesson of discipline was taught.

Extreme punctiliousness has sometimes been charged against Gompers. After reading this book one wonders if it was not the method intuitively adopted by the born actor to strike the imagination of those about him. An employer called him in to demand a wage reduction. Gompers was convinced that the reduction was necessary and that a strike against it would be futile. But the employer was so incautious as to trade upon friendly relations with the young official by asking him to use his influence with the workers in favor of the cut. This, Gompers felt, tied his tongue. He put the question before a union meeting, sat silent while a strike was voted, and saw the employer lose money and the strike fail. But he demonstrated the right and duty of the men to make their own decisions without undue influence.

At one time his father became foreman of a shop. Though on good terms with him, Gompers never entered his father's house during this period, in order to avoid the smallest suspicion.

At another time an enemy, addressing a large meeting, became hoarse and could hardly be heard. Gompers gave him a cough drop, but later completely demolished his position.

When the manufacture of cigars in tenements led to all the abuses of home work, Gompers made a house-to-house canvas and drew up a statistical table of tenement house overcrowding, hours of work, and wages. Then ensued a fight for prohibitive legislation, by lobbying and non-partisan pressure. This met the opposition of the Socialists, who aided in defeating an endorsed candidate. In one session the bill failed, in the next it was passed. The courts declared it unconstitutional; another bill was passed and declared unconstitutional. At length the union had to turn to economic pressure. Gompers became sceptical of legislation as a reform measure. He became sceptical of Socialists; he became sceptical of courts. Later in his life he risked jail to disobey an injunction.

Movements came and movements went; leaders rose and leaders fell. But somehow the unions, in spite of all vicissitudes, lasted and grew, and somehow Gompers, who identified himself first of all with the unions, remained doggedly in the ascendancy. The first office of the Federation of Labor was in the front room of his flat; for long he worked from there without even a full time secretary. He travelled about the country helping strikes, preaching the gospel of permanent, national, trade organization, of union discipline, of collective agreements. He knew every important person in the movement; he loved society and hated solitude; the cause was literally centred in his person. For years the Federation seemed as he says, "a rope of sand." Patched up in one place, it would fall apart in another. But he kept at it, travelling sometimes on freight cars, often making up deficits in his expense account out of his own meagre salary. There was no struggle and no industry that did not know him. At this period Gompers read Herbert Spencer and picked out the following sentence to remember: "From the indefinite and incoherent heterogeneity to the definite, coherent homogeneity."

Gompers, as a trade-union man, had taken an active part in the Henry George campaign in New York, but even then he insisted on keeping the unions clear of permanent political entanglements. They must be preserved for their own function; not split or diverted for political purposes. This was why his career was marked by such a long and bitter fight on the Socialists. He had nothing against Socialist theory as such, though he lacked confidence in it. He distinguished between their theoretical "class-consciousness" and the profound, as he called it, "primitive force that had its origin in experience only"—class feeling. Any trade-unionist could have any politics which pleased him—but Gompers bitterly resisted every attempt to tie the trade-unions as a whole to a political party or to an idealist program of revolution. It so happened that the evening after reading this book I saw The Wild Duck. There is a strong family resemblance between Ibsen's scorn of Gregers Werle, the young idealist who shatters existing human happiness by preaching an unreal perfection, and Gompers's scorn of the Socialists who split the unions and "found it absolutely impossible to understand fundamentals necessary to developing practical plans for industrial development." Again and again he speaks of "an element in the labor movement that was unwilling to accept any advantage that would bring betterment under the present organization of society. This element would 'compromise' on nothing short of revolution, and anything that tended to make revolutions less necessary aroused their opposition."

The fight against the left, like all other fights in which he engaged, was vigorous in the extreme. Gompers's compromises and adjustments were carried on quietly, man to man; his conflicts resounded. As he says later about a debate with a priest:

> Perhaps I was savage, but when any man enters the arena of public life, he must stand the gaff. . . . In any contest where human interests are involved, I have

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never given nor wished to receive mercy. The issue is the thing. It is a clean fight and a man's fight.

Loyalty like Gompers's gives a man a right to fight for his cause. He and other young workers saw how the unions were weakened by the desertion of their best leaders for political jobs or industrial executive positions. This was particularly the case in the steel industry in the early nineties. A group of which he was a member agreed informally that "under no circumstances will we accept public office or become interested in any business venture of any character or accept any preferment outside of the labor movement." All kept their word. This was not through lack of temptation. John Dos Passos, the banker, offered him a business position with a fabulous salary; he was urged to accept salaried political appointments; eventually the National Association of Manufacturers attempted to corrupt him.

In economics, Gompers always refused to accept the fatalism of completed systems—whether conservative or radical. He always believed in voluntary, functional organization for purposes of social control. He was always outraged by the lack of reasoned control which resulted in unemployment, and always opposed wage reductions as a remedy, since he believed in the economy of high wages and the necessity of maintaining popular purchasing power. He had not been in the labor movement long when he saw the futility of opposing new machinery. He favored improvements leading to higher productivity, so long as they were compatible with the growth of labor organization. He opposed the attempt to curb the growth of industrial combination by legislation, believing that it was an inevitable tendency and that laws against it would be turned upon the unions. He favored amalgamation of trade unions as fast as it could come by voluntary means, though he opposed attempts to decree or force it. He favored organization of the less skilled as fast as they could be educated to union discipline; he always advocated "equal pay for equal work" by men and women. In his later years he was deeply concerned with industrial research and the elimination of economic waste, though he did not understand these subjects in any detail.

Certain passages about trade-unionism illuminate Gompers's conception of social processes:

> My patience has rested upon realization of facts, not upon lack of idealism or sentiment. I realized that since the labor movement is a living, sentient thing, growth comes from life within. It can be aided, directed, not forced. Just as a plant may be cultivated and pruned, cared for in every way, still it cannot be compelled to grow or flower, so the labor movement cannot be handled or computed as material quantities.
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> Then genial Gene Debs, with much avowed idealism, tried to fit the labor movement into a different shape from that into which it had naturally developed. It is hard for the reformer to realize that the labor movement is a living thing. . . . It is not transformed by any dictum or overnight resolution, but must grow into something different.
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> The whole program of the labor movement is in the last analysis an effort to bring about an understanding of the human element in production and the services of the wage-earner to society and civilization.

In spite of an attempt to arrange the material, in which undoubtedly the author was greatly aided by his able secretary, Miss Florence Thorne, the book remains an immense, variegated jumble, incredibly rich in experience, acquaintances, activities, anecdotes, opinions, just as they rose to the light of memory. If an "expressionist" should try to write a biography, this should be his model. But as the work wears on, and later events are described, the personality draws robes about itself. One feels that the opposition to dogma and forced development tended to become dogmatic itself and may have pruned real blossoms. One suspects that a desire for external consistency, a pride of conviction, began to veil the old first-love of the workers' organized entity and the activity in building it. Gompers passed from creator to protector. One wonders whether the European labor movement, which he so sharply rebuked because of its self-chosen leadership, its economic and political philosophy, its effort to avert the dictated peace of Versailles, may not have been as natural and inevitable and sincere a development as the American trade-unions. There is no doubting the reality of Gompers's patriotism. It began in London, when as a small boy he heard the popular songs about the glory of the western land; it grew as he crossed the Atlantic; if flowered here. He had in childhood identified himself with something that stood for liberty, something that was to him the spirit of his adopted country. Whenever the powers of that country, political or economic, oppressed him and his, he regarded them as traitors, not himself. He never allowed anyone else to wave the flag more vigorously than he. This in part accounts for his attitude on the War. It was at first hard for him to accept it, but having done so, his identification with the official national attitude was complete, emotional, vigorous.

Gompers was never the man to build up a structure of cold logic; he learned from experience, came to conclusions intuitively, felt his way. When as a young man he took the $25 which his wife had saved to buy new dresses and spent it for a violin which he could not play, because of the irresistible fascination of making music, he revealed his temperament. Later, in discussing his love for opera, he writes:

> Though superficially there seems to be a wide chasm between a grand opera singer and a labor leader, yet in the last analysis we both are ministering to the souls of men and we have to understand and sympathize with their deepest experiences if we would interpret them to themselves. Beauty in life is found in widely different languages and aspects. . . . The wonder and beauty of art is overshadowed by the glory of that in which I have participated. . . . Life has never been tame for me. I have natural safeguards against getting into ruts because I cannot work without the inspiration of feeling. This personal characteristic keeps my mind alert to human and dramatic values of happenings—a faculty that serves me in timing speech and deed.

His power, his jealousy of the unions and their prestige, his hot partisanship of his opinions, his supreme vanity in identifying the labor movement with himself—these were the power, the jealousy, the partisanship and the vanity of the virtuoso. And these account for his extraordinary achievement as a leader of men.

GEORGE SOULE.

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W. B. Yeats

THE twentieth century, though it has turned out a great deal of verse, has so far produced very little poetry of the first order. It would seem that the conditions under which we live are not favorable to the kind of emotions appropriate to poetry. A great poet must take himself seriously; he must believe in his own dignity and the nobility of his emotions; he must be willing to identify himself with the god with whom he was formerly supposed to be inspired. But today that is rather difficult. For one thing, we have learned to see ourselves scientifically: we are conscious of our kinship with the other animals and of our subjection to physical laws, rather than of our relation to the gods. Our great men of imagination seem often to occupy themselves with scientific theory rather than with poetry. And for another thing, we are living in the first phases of democratic society—a period when the distinction of the poet—or any other kind—is more difficult than it was at a time when fewer people were educated, but those who were had to meet a higher standard and when the dominating ideals of civilization were less completely identified with commercial enterprise. Instead of poetry, we have the novel, which has become the characteristic modern literary form because it admits more easily of the point of view of science, with which it has always been closely allied, and because by its looser form it lends itself to the journalism and by its more familiar tone to the less distinguished events, of a democratic society. Flaubert and his followers or those who were under the influence of the French novel of the time—Turgeniev and James and Joyce—have succeeded in bringing to the novel the sort of concentration and artistic integrity which had hitherto chiefly been found in the poem or poetic play; but a poem would scarcely have been an equally appropriate vehicle for the tone of irony which in these writers arises both from the scientific point of view and from the phenomena of a middle-class society. In the meantime, on the other hand, from Byron's Don Juan, through Browning, to the "novels in verse" of Mr. E. A. Robinson, the long poem has shown a tendency to assimilate itself to the novel and in proportion as it has done so has fallen short of succeeding as poetry.

Now Mr. W. B. Yeats is one of the only men living who, in spite of these unfavorable influences, has taken poetry with thorough-going seriousness and achieved success of the highest order. In an age when writers of verse have as a rule either been content to drop the grand manner and adopt the language and point of view of the newspapers or, if they try to sustain a noble mien, do so with self-consciousness and with a patent artificiality, Mr. Yeats has worn his robe and wreath as if they were a legitimate inheritance. The dignity of the poet sits naturally upon him and not like a deliberately assumed disguise. Yet it is interesting to see, in connection with the present situation of poetry, what comprehensive and resolute rejections Mr. Yeats has been obliged to make in order to preserve this rôle. He has had to turn his back on the whole scientific democratic world, and stand apart from the questions which agitate it. That he has been distinctly conscious of taking up a position appears from his autobiographical writings: he tells for example, in The Trembling of the Veil, of the vital issue which seemed to be raised for him in his youth by the then popular and novel "realism" of Bastien-Lepage as against the mysticism of the pre-Raphaelite painters. The Joan of Arc of Bastien-Lepage already to the young Yeats meant the scientific vision which contradicted and destroyed his own.

The passages in which he discusses Bernard Shaw are particularly illuminating. Shaw—an Irishman come to London like himself and a man of equal imaginative force and intellectual ability—chose the opposite road from Yeats and took on the whole unwieldy cargo of the modern world—sociology, economics, physical science and journalism. Shaw heroically shouldered it all; but Yeats as systematically eschewed it, and says that, with all admiration for Shaw, he was sometimes appalled by the aspect of his work, which had taken on the character of the materials with which it dealt and become "so much metropolitan lead and solder." The only sciences which Yeats pursued were those which, with poetry, were sinking to decay—astrology, clairvoyancy and magic. While Mr. Shaw was grappling with Marx, Mr. Yeats was editing Blake: and it is significant that Mr. Yeats, whose sense of reality is not inferior to that of any scientist or realist living, should seem to feel a belief in the supernatural to be somehow bound up with the faith in the poet's vision. Yet the comparative difficulty of this belief, even for Mr. Yeats himself, indicates the profound gulf which science has fixed between the present and the past. It does not seem ridiculous for Dante to have believed in his visions; nor even for Blake to have believed in his. But it does somehow seem ridiculous for Mr. Yeats to believe in Madame Blavatsky's. He himself, as I say, appears unsatisfied: one feels, in his narration of his supernatural experiences, a margin of scientific doubt. Like Huysmans, he betrays an instinct to scrutinize and check them up that is disastrous to genuine mysticism. Yet I do not want to suggest that Mr. Yeats would have got any further if he had occupied himself with legitimate science. His writings on mysticism are full of great intelligence and great imaginative insight and his theories—such as that which postulates a sea of racial images rolling to and fro through the mind of humanity—are often impressive, despite the fact that they have been arrived at mystically instead of through the methods of modern psychology.

None the less, for all his isolation and his occultism, Mr. Yeats has in another direction been closely related to the contemporary consciousness. He is the greatest representative in English of the modern literary movement originally known as Symbolism, which constitutes perhaps the only important poetic development since the beginning of the seventies—that is, the only successful attempt to adapt poetry to the changing mentality of the western world. The later Yeats does, to be sure, present striking differences from most of the later practitioners of Symbolism: one of the most popular discoveries of the movement has come to be that tragi-comic vein originally worked by Corbière and Laforgue and recently imported into English by Mr. T. S. Eliot. This has provided a vehicle in verse for the ironic tone of which I have spoken in Flaubert and Joyce and has turned it to real poetic account. The poignancy of these writers results from the conflict in them between the poet's conviction of nobility and the universal banality of the modern man. Like Flaubert in Trois Contes, like Joyce in Ulysses, they are contrasting their own lives unfavorably with some other kind of life of which they believe men once to have been capable. But Yeats has never exploited this vein because he has never been infected by that banality. The dreary summer resort closing for the winter

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which discouraged Jules Laforgue, the afternoon teas which inhibit Mr. Eliot, do not disconcert Mr. Yeats; he does not feel life in terms of these things; his temperament stands as far removed from them as his round tower in Ireland does. Another popular development of Symbolism has been in the direction of obscurity. The Symbolists, coasting down the slope of romanticism away from objective description and universal emotions, arrived at a highly special subjective language for unique individual sensations. The danger was, as appeared from the beginning in Mallarmé, that either on account of insufficiently vivid sensations or insufficient skill in suggesting them, the poet would become unintelligible. The formula of Symbolism, which admits such a confusion of images and ideas, has always enabled a great deal of nonsense to pass for poetry. It has also encouraged a great deal of arid ingenuity, such as we find in much of the work of Miss Edith Sitwell, Mr. Wallace Stevens and M. Tristan Tzara.

Mr. Yeats has escaped all these tendencies but he derives essentially from the same school as these other writers. The images of symbolistic poetry stand in a somewhat different relation to the sensations they are supposed to convey than the metaphors of more classical poetry to the things they are supposed to describe: it has been suggested that the characteristic of Symbolism was to allow the subconscious to possess itself of the waking mind and to put together what images it chose with a minimum of rational scrutiny; and certainly the successful poetry of Symbolism has something of the significance in irrelevance of dreams. Now a great deal of Yeats answers to this description as well as Mallarmé or Rimbaud. As Mr. Padraic Colum has pointed out, much of Mr. Yeats's Irish mythology—the Danaan children, the Shadowy Horses and Fergus with his brazen cars—has no more exact meaning than Verlaine's "guêpe ivre de son vol fou" or Rimbaud's angels and unearthly coaches and apocalyptic landscapes. They are simply the shadows by which he hopes to suggest certain complexes of feelings and ideas. His symbolistic affinities become especially plain in such a poem as the recently published Black Centaur, which makes no use of Irish mythology and which resembles exactly certain things of Rimbaud. In all this, Mr. Yeats differs from the general stream of contemporary English poetry, as distinguished from American and Irish. The Modern Georgians, of whom I suppose Mr. Masefield is the chief, have never been Symbolists—nor has Mr. A. E. Housman.

So much for Mr. Yeats in relation to the ideas and influences of his time: any further account of him must concern itself with the development of his individual genius. This genius first manifested itself in the iridescent brilliance of his early poetry, which stained a sort of Shelleyan fluidity with a sort of Keatsian richness of color: The Wanderings of Oisin may be taken indeed as Mr. Yeats's Endymion. If he had never written anything else but this long poem and such lyrics as The Lake-Isle of Innisfree and The Man Who Dreamed of Fairyland, he would still, as the creator of a new sort of strangeness, have been a considerable poet. And indeed many people seem to suppose that Mr. Yeats's career began and ended with these early rainbows. Yet they have proved scarcely more than a romantic prelude to his more important poetry. Some time about the beginning of the century, Mr. Yeats tells us in his autobiography, he became dissatisfied with this early work and resolved to eliminate rigorously from his style both romantic rhetoric and symbolistic vagueness. He would reduce it to something definite and hard; something both severer and more intense. In a poem which is at once an example of this later style and a description of it, he says that—

> Maybe a twelvemonth since
> Suddenly I began,
> In scorn of this audience
> Imagining a man,
> And his sun-freckled face,
> And grey Connemara cloth,
> Climbing up to a place
> Where stone is dark under froth,
> And the down turn of his wrist
> When the flies drop in the stream:
> A man who does not exist,
> A man who is but a dream;
> And cried! "Before I am old
> I shall have written him one
> Poem maybe as cold
> And passionate as the dawn."

The change to this new style is seen very clearly in the collected volume of Later Poems* which has just been published in America. The first pieces in the collection—those originally included in The Wind Among the Reeds and dating from 1899—are still ornamented with "the flaming lute-thronged angelic door" and "the heaven's embroidered cloths—enwrought with golden and silver light" of the younger Yeats. But by 1912 these pre-Raphaelite growths have been completely rooted out. He has worked into a soberer and solider style from which the soap-bubble colors have vanished and left only the clear aspect of "cold Clare rock and Galway rock and thorn."

He has become less prodigal of symbols and names and those symbols which he does employ have acquired a new austerity—a new purity and precision—

> I call to the eye of the mind
> A well long choked up and dry
> And boughs long stripped by the wind,
> And I call to the mind's eye
> Pallor of an ivory face,
> Its lofty dissolute air,
> A man climbing up to a place
> The salt sea wind has swept bare.

When he revisits the heroic world of Irish mythology it is seen with a new homeliness of detail. And more and more he fixes upon the imperfect world in which he actually finds himself. He desires, as he says in another part of the poem about the fisherman. "To write for my own race And for the reality." And again—

> Through all the lying days of my youth
> I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
> Now I may wither into the truth.

With a boldness rewarded by a success unequalled among his English contemporaries, he undertakes to intensify into

* Later Poems, Plays, Plays and Controversies, Essays, by W. B. Yeats. New York: the Macmillan Company. $2.50 each. The first four volumes of a new collected edition of Yeats, to be complete in six volumes. The last two volumes—Early Poems and Stories, and Autobiography—are announced for early publication.

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poetry the circumstances of his own life and the events of the life about him. And this he does, not by vulgarizing his style, but by dignifying his subjects—at the same time that he does not cease to deal with them in the plainest language. He can even challenge comparison with Dante—whom he now describes as "the chief imagination of Christendom"—in his ability to achieve a grand manner by sheer intensity without rhetoric.

How he suggests the sharpness of Dante's allusions, for example, in the following passage:

> Traders or soldiers who have left me blood
> That has not passed through any huxter's loin,
> Pardon, and you that did not weigh the cost,
> Old Butlers when you took to horse and stood
> Beside the brackish waters of the Boyne
> Till your bad master blenched and all was lost.

And Dante's scorn in the following—

> Why should I blame her that she filled my days
> With misery, or that she would of late
> Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,
> Or hurled the little streets against the great,
> Had they but courage equal to desire?

Mr. Yeats has assumed a Dantesque mask of pride—but has a Dantesque exaltation as well as bitterness—

> And what of her that took
> All till my youth was gone
> With scarce a pitying look?
> How should I praise that one?
> When day begins to break
> I count my good and bad,
> Being wakeful for her sake,
> Remembering what she had,
> What eagle look still shows,
> While up from my heart's root
> So great a sweetness flows
> I shake from head to foot.

Yet the development of this later style seems to coincide with a disillusion which first definitely appears in the poetry of about fifteen years ago. He had made the fairies in one of his earliest poems tell the child whom they were leading away that "the world is more full of weeping than you can understand"; but he can no longer escape to fairyland like the heroes of his early poems. He cannot evade the frustations of life and in general the ecstasies with which he offsets them are such as life actually offers within its own limits. The acute consciousness of these limits has brought his art to a sharper focus. The unbinding of "youth's dreamy load" has made him a better poet. It is as if, no longer hoping much from anything but poetry, he had applied to it as never before all the diligence of his mind and the energy of his passion. One almost fears that the occasional tendency of his very latest work to run to a new sort of rhetoric of its own may be the unavoidable result of his recent re-entry into Irish politics. But it would make little difference if it were: the bulk of poetry contained in this collected volume—with which should be reckoned the Four Plays for Dancers*—constitutes a contribution to literature not only quite outranking any but two or three even possible others by living writers in English but probably comparable only to the very greatest in its kind in the world.

Mr. Yeats is one of the few genuine masters alive—perhaps the only poet of the first magnitude. And it is to be hoped that the publication of this new volume—which includes some matter hitherto inaccessible—will give his later work a wider audience. As I have suggested, the popular conception of Mr. Yeats seems hitherto to have limited itself to the cliché of an agreeable but innocuous "mystic" identified with "the Lake of Innisfree" and the Celtic Twilight.

Bernard Shaw once predicted that when the contemporaries of Eugène Brieux died and went to Heaven they would be almost as much ashamed to acknowledge they did not know anything about his plays as the dead Elizabethans would have been to confess they had never heard of Shakespeare. If this were to be said today of Mr. Yeats, it would be a great deal more appropriate and calculated, I should say, to avert a more considerable danger. Three years ago, the volume of Plays for Dancers, which showed the later Yeats at his very best, took second place or third place or no place in the columns of the literary reviews, while Mr. Cabell, Mr. Hergesheimer and Mr. Huxley got their liberal front pages.

> A woman's beauty is like a white
> Frail bird, like a white sea-bird alone
> At daybreak after a stormy night
> Between two furrows upon the ploughed land;
> A sudden storm and it was thrown
> Between dark furrows upon the ploughed land.
> How many centuries spent
> The sedentary soul
> In toils of measurement
> Beyond eagle or mole,
> Beyond hearing or seeing,
> Or Archimedes' guess,
> To raise into being that loveliness?
>
> A strange unserviceable thing,
> A fragile, exquisite, pale shell,
> That the vast troubled waters bring
> To the loud sands before day has broken.
> The storm arose and suddenly fell
> Amid the dark before day had broken.
> What death? what discipline?
> What bonds no man could unbind
> Being imagined within
> The labyrinth of the mind,
> What pursuing or fleeing,
> What wounds, what bloody press
> Dragged into being
> This loveliness.

The book which contained this lyric and much else had little to say to our critics in general and aroused no excitement or awe among them. But, unlike most of the works which took precedence to it, it could afford to wait and lie idle: it was written for a long life.

EDMUND WILSON.

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* Plays and Controversies, by W. B. Yeats, New York: the Macmillan Co. $2.50.

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Troubadour

Troubadour, by Alfred Kreymborg. New York: Boni and Liveright. $3.

HERE is a book that disarms my critical judgment. The New York that Mr. Kreymborg writes about is my New York: the spiritual history he relates is that of my generation: and he himself spent his impressionable years in the same neighborhood that Mr. Paul Rosenfeld, Mr. David Liebovitz and myself grew up in, hemmed in by slabs of brownstone and brick, brooded over by the shaky thunder of the elevated railway. I am delighted with Troubadour; but there is a touch of Narcissus in my delight; and while I think it is a fine autobiography, I am also conscious of the fact that it is *our* autobiography—mine and Mr. Kreymborg's and Mr. Rosenfeld's, and Mr. Liebovitz's, *and others.*

How Miss Mary Austin would shudder to think of even a tiny section of American literature falling into our unamerindian hands! In each of us, no matter how streaked with other strains, Jewish, English, Dutch, or whatever they might be, there was a line of German progenitors; and the city we were thrown into was the city that had taken shape before our birth (1885-1895) as a result of the German and Irish migrations. It was the New York of that great comedian, Adolph Phillip, bland and leering the New York of the Irving Place Theatre and Zum Weissen Rossel, the New York that lunched heartily on sandwiches and beer before communing with the Lares and Penates in the cemetery; the New York that in more vacant parts of the city had its Biergartens and on festive occasions was regaled at the Saengerbund, or reduced a little of its exuberant girth at the Turnverein, an institution not yet bleached and manicured into the contemporary Y.

What a city that was—dirty and gemütlich! I remember the dingy halls of the brownstone fronts with the gas flaring uncertainly on the murky nights of autumn; the crystal-hung parlors where china and drapery writhed in agonies of design; the furniture that was upholstered without being comfortable, the wall of gilt frames within which soppy ladies and barbered landscapes spoke the pidgin-english of art; and the perpetual dusting and dragging and scrubbing that was necessary to keep these glorious temples of domesticity from being hygienic as well as æsthetic misdemeanors. Yet there were spring days when, viciously, one hooked murphies from the corner grocer and roasted them in the vacant lots; there was the sweet heaviness of summer nights when one drove pushmobiles up and down the block, brilliantly lighting the way with a candle in a cigar-box; and, for me, the bright days were heightened by such precious events as shaking hands with John L. Sullivan in his brother's saloon, looking in at the Christmas window at Macy's, discovering that the policeman at Eden Musée was more waxen than any conceivable original, or finally—and this was a high moment—encountering the debonair Phillipini, chef of Delmonico's, who spoke French to my grandfather in a swift liquescent stream, too rapid for any American ear.

These aren't Mr. Kreymborg's memories; but they are part of the stream he has started flowing through my own mind; and he will pardon me if I have seized the opportunity to make notes on the margin of his book! From these disheartening beginnings, which knew little art save the sentimental ballad, and learned little science except the kingly game of chess, Mr. Kreymborg takes us through the qualms and hopes and setbacks and triumphs that mark America's literary coming-of-age, the history of the last twenty years. Mr. Kreymborg's own development serves admirably as a chart for the whole movement. Through his tentative prose poems Mr. Kreymborg became aware of his vocation; and after he was twenty-one he ceased seriously to struggle with the practical life or to make an attempt to perform its duties. A generation before this, a man without any independent means would have thought twice before turning his back so decisively upon the world of business; but with a desultory income from chess and no family responsibilities and none of the lust for the flesh pots which a young member of the upper bourgeoisie so often is prey to, Mr. Kreymborg threw himself into the monastic discipline of a literary career. This practical independence from the standards of the "successful" was reflected in Mr. Kreymborg's literary development. Before long he was whole-heartedly committed to poetry, and, with his mandolute occasionally aiding, worked out for himself a form sufficiently responsive to cage the marvelous imp of his fantasy—no angel beating against the void but the most urbane of monkeys swinging against the top of steely trees.

The adventure was not pursued in solitude; there were Others. With great devotion to all that was experimental and formative in American art, Mr. Kreymborg threw out a succession of projects: the American Quarterly, which did not come through, the Glebe, which had its beginnings and then, like a later contemporary, petered out as its publishers sought to use it as a medium for the more accessible and better established foreign work; and then came Others itself; and after it, in a haze of flattering rumor, Broom. During this period American art and letters had more vitality, it seems to me, than it has had in any other period of American life, saving perhaps the thirty years that preceded the Civil War. The Masses was founded; new weeklies came on the scene, or were refurbished; a group of experimental publishers took risks that greybeards shuddered at; and all over the country an audience of eager young people, looking towards Greenwich Village as a symbol that embodied their protest against the standardized goodfellowship, clammy respectability, and congealed optimism of America, began to write with a confidence that they need no longer be merely diarists, turned in upon themselves.

Mr. Kreymborg assisted valiantly at this birth of the arts in America; or to speak more accurately, he was one of the first poets to demonstrate that it was alive and kicking. The title of Troubadour which covers his book attaches also to his work and personality. In contrast to all the bright mediocrities that share the odd left-over pages of our advertising sheets, the art of these new men is a true admixture of their own personalities and the life that they have experienced; and just as the watercolors of John Marin do not represent the New York the banal camera sees, but the New York that a sensitive mind experiences, so in literature, the breaks and dissonances and distortions, the absence of fine gestures and nobilities, which characterize the work of Kreymborg or Waldo Frank, give us a keener intuition of reality, frequently, than literature in the more conventional mould. The reality is perhaps unbearable; but the art is not, for the best of it has been quickened and remoulded by a humane spirit.

Nor is this new art, as the drab subway rider sometimes thinks, precious and "funny" and far apart from any popular art. The truth is that men like Kreymborg, Lindsay, and Sandburg are real troubadours: Mr. Kreymborg's art

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is not meant for the chamber alone: it is meant for recitation and performance—and how well does Mr. Kreymborg do it! In touring with his puppets through the country Mr. Kreymborg found that Main Street, for all its superficial coarseness and stupidity, had as keen a feeling for his plays as the big cities; that it was ready to meet the poet half way. It is a quaint irony that deep and habitual cockneys, like Mr. Kreymborg and myself, distrust the solitary influence of New York and wish to give our culture a habitat in other regions. If the rest of the country has cast its bread upon New York waters, we are ready now to return it a hundred fold! No one who has grown up in the shadow of an elevated railway is foolish enough to throw stones at Main Street.

I have scarcely space to warn the reader that Mr. Kreymborg's prose is different from his poetry; and although the poet lurks under the surface of the more spongy medium, the reader must prepare himself for a longer and more pedestrian journey. The last few years of Mr. Kreymborg's life are perhaps too close to be seasoned by either memory or art, and towards the end a certain baldness of statement is increased, perhaps, by the mere number of things to be stated. The larger part of Troubadour, however, is compact and poignant, and in treating of his loves and friendships Mr. Kreymborg has written with a tenderness and a quiet sincerity which contrasts happily with the smeary vulgarity of one or two recent autobiographies. Troubadour is a "Who's Who" of contemporary American letters, and a "What's What," and a "How Come." I am sure that it will live in history; and I would like to think that it will live in literature. But that is something that those of us who are involved in the story cannot decide!

LEWIS MUMFORD.

The Constant Nymph

The Constant Nymph, by Margaret Kennedy. New York: Doubleday Page and Company. $2.

FEW aspects of Anglo-Saxon art plead for critical satire so urgently as the English School of Oratorio Musicians. We have seen these august gentlemen, interrupting their composition of a Chorus of High Priests to partake of tea and toast within their cloistered gardens. We have watched them at their daughters' ballad concerts, nodding happily at the hopeful development of home-grown talent. We have read letters to their publishers, promising a complete fair copy of Boadicea's Victory within ten days, and begging that two hundred impressions shall be delivered in ample time for the joint choirs to get into training for Michaelmas. Choral unions, female quartets that play from three to six on alternate Wednesdays, competitive soirées where the prize goes to the hostess bagging the largest lion: we have known them all and waited for some skilled ironic pen.

And now Miss Margaret Kennedy writes a novel so fearlessly unrespectable in its sympathies, so alluring in its characterizations, so romantic and so true that all England buys it, reads it, and promptly bursts into smiles of wholesome bitterness.

Cleverly Miss Kennedy has made her musical genius an Englishman, Albert Sanger, asserting at the outset that he "was barely known to the musical public of Great Britain" since that public is "disinclined to believe that great men are occasionally born in Hammersmith." More cleverly still she has presented the home surroundings of her hero as a thoroughly disorganized châlet in the Austrian Tyrol, where the children of two wives and a mistress of the great Sanger help him to his death on page 76 in an atmosphere of untidy petticoats, irregular brandy and inadequate pork.

The rest of the book shows the spirit of Sanger, brutal, passionate, disorderly, and sound, chafing at the small satisfactions of England. Sanger is dead, but his influence is alive and at war. And though this main struggle never for a moment loses its central place on Miss Kennedy's stage, it winds about itself the garb of fiction, and beguiles the reader with many personalities and at least one acute triangle.

Sanger's disciple, Lewis Dodd—also, cleverly, an Englishman—marries the charming English bourgeois cousin of some of the Sanger children and goes to live in a well-ordered house at Strand-on-the-Green. Three of the children are sent to English schools where "they can turn out a splendid type." But the buoyant natures of Tessa and Lina and Sebastian will not bear such an imprint. They run away. Even Strand-on-the-Green is better than enforced hockey and Jardins sous la Pluie played fortissimo in an adjacent cubicle.

They bring back to Lewis a vivid picture of the life he has left, of the genius to which he may become untrue. His wife, Florence, scents the dissatisfaction, and tracks it down with Anglo-Saxon thoroughness into personal rivalry. Lewis must be in love with Tessa. Her jealousy is fanned by two factors: her own love for her husband and her knowledge that she has not understood him. As an alumna of the English School of Oratorio Musicians she has tried to lionize him, and he will not be lionized. Her consistent persecution of her little rival precipitates the final and fatal elopement. The curtain falls and the struggle is undecided. Genius has escaped the shackles of convention and order to fall by its own impotence.

It is not often that the author allows her thesis a naked demonstration, but in one scene the fiction is stripped down and the main issue shines out. Florence Dodd has traced her husband to the home of his old associates:

> Music, with all these people, came first; that was why they talked about it as if nobody else had any right to it. Once Florence had liked them all too well; now that she understood them better she was frightened of them. She wanted to challenge them, to make a demonstration of her power, to call them back to that world of necessity and compromise which they so sublimely ignored, but with which they would ultimately have to reckon. After all she was the strongest. She had order and power on her side. They were nothing but a pack of rebels.

An author who can so clearly state one cause, and yet throw her sympathy and hero worship to the other has herself solved a compromise. She has written a satirical novel, and securely pinioned her subject to the wall for all to laugh at, and yet she has lured a public composed largely of such subjects to read her book and thus to laugh at themselves.

Given such a large order to fill, it is small wonder that Miss Kennedy has relegated literary style to the background. At her hands the English language becomes a serviceable medium, coin of the realm, useful as a means to an end. And if her shillings and pence transfer easily into marks or francs and buy for the reader convincing

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pictures of Munich and Brussels, one is tempted to satisfaction. Why should they also jingle as numismatic curios?

Though said to be under thirty, Miss Kennedy can bring to her characters a sympathy that magnifies its object without distortion. Her situations are developed with humor and her descriptions with restraint. A Russian ballet master is writing to his wife:

> "Spring has already come to this charming valley, and the meadows round me are full of . . ."
>
> He had a look at the meadows around him, but could not determine what it was that filled them. There were a lot of blue flowers and some yellow, but as these were neither camelias nor gardenias he could not put a name to them. He compromised:
>
> "full of a thousand blooms of every color."

Similarly is her dialogue a significant and transparent lens by which her characters are elucidated. She refrains from saying things about people which they themselves do not say. A single exception has been found in the profanity of the young Sangers. The reader is continually told of their lewd habits of speech, but rarely given a chance to hear more than an isolated "damn."

One other fault casts a small shade on the book's importance: its inappropriate and banal title. The Constant Nymph suggests a pastoral lyric, a romantic glimpse into a post-war drawing-room, even a ballerina's tragedy, but it does not convey the bitter fight between talent and genius, the harsh contrast between orderly, constructive calm, and high revolt. Is this perhaps another subtle bit of compromise, one final bait to invite the bourgeoisie to their own funeral? For its success, at least, whether accidental or intended, one must admit appreciation.

MARY ELLIS OPDYCKE.

Two Heads Are Better Than One

Der Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis, 1911-1914. Aus den Geheimakten der russischen Staatsarchive; Im Auftrage des deutschen auswärtigen Amtes in deutscher Ubertragung herausgegeben von Friedrich Stieve. 4 volumes. Berlin, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1924.

Iswolski und der Weltkrieg. Auf Grund der neuen Dokumentenveröfftentlichung des deutschen auswärtigen Amtes. By Friedrich Stieve. Berlin, Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1924. 269 pp.

WHEN, in 1918, Alexander Isvolski sat down to write his reminiscences, he had a long and important story to tell. Unfortunately death overtook him before he could finish more than the first volume of the three he had planned for. But perhaps the loss was, after all, not so great, for it may well be doubted whether the Russian statesman would have told the whole truth. In any case, we should have been but ill-informed regarding his activities had not the Soviet government in 1922 presented the world with a large collection of documents (Materials for the History of Franco-Russian Relations 1910-1914), of which René Marchand's famous Livre Noir is a translation. These documents, together with others from the Siebert collection and some five hundred hitherto unknown papers have now been assembled in chronological order and published (unfortunately in German translation) in a four volume work edited under the direction of the German Foreign Office by Friedrich Stieve, who has added a fifth volume summarizing the most important contents in a scholarly and useful way. In all there are 1,374 documents, giving the most complete picture we yet have of the relations between any two of the great powers in the years immediately preceding the War.

There can no longer be any doubt that Isvolski was "one of the most prominent and effective statesmen concerned in European political affairs for the twelve years prior to the collapse of the Russian Empire," as the translator of the first volume of his memoirs puts it. His correspondence shows convincingly that he was effective enough, but not in the cause of peace. Indeed, Alexander Isvolski must be reckoned with the leading artisans of the World War.

It would be interesting to trace the political career of this fateful man, but space does not permit. Suffice it to say that, after badly miscalculating the situation in Japan before 1904 he managed to escape from an awkward position and in 1906 became Russian foreign minister. By that time he had become convinced that Russia's mission was not in Asia, but in Europe, and it was under his direction that Russia resumed her traditional policy in the Near East. Well-versed in economics and history, Isvolski realized, especially after the war with Japan, that the opening of the Straits must be the first and foremost concern of his government. It was a goal towards which Russia had been working for many years before she embarked on her Far Eastern adventure, but she had inevitably met with the determined opposition of England, and to a less extent of France and Austria. In order to obviate this difficulty Isvolski determined to revive the moribund alliance with France, to win the English even at the expense of costly sacrifices, and then to bargain with Russia. The attempt was made in 1908, and it failed not only because of the action of the Austrian foreign minister, but also because of the negative attitude of France and England. Isvolski had overestimated his own ability; he had put Russia in a bad fix; he had made himself impossible. In 1910 he was relieved of his duties and sent to Paris as Russian ambassador. His successor, Sazonov, was rather inclined to work, as before, with the Germans, even to the detriment of Russia's allies. The Potsdam Agreement of 1910 and the continuous dispute with England over Persia, is eloquent proof of this.

Isvolski, however, had not changed his mind. His first year in Paris was a miserable one, and the first documents in his correspondence show him complaining bitterly of the lack of coöperation between the Allies, or the anti-Russian sentiments of the French radicals and of the levity with which the French government was embarking on the Moroccan adventure, from which Russia could derive no good whatever. He asks for funds to buy the French press, but without success. He induces his successor to make at least the best of the Franco-German settlement of November, 1909 by securing French support for Russia in the Straits Question, but Sazonov shows but little inclination to make capital out of the situation. The prospect was dreary indeed.

But the gods were with Isvolski and against humanity. Everything changed as in a dream when, in March, 1912, Poincaré succeeded to the premiership. It was a disastrous event, for Poincaré, convinced of the inevitability of war with Germany, agreed entirely with Isvolski that the En-

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tente must be strengthened and that the central powers must be shown that the days of their dictation were over. After the first conversations with the new premier Isvolski felt like a new man. Life was once more worth living. Of course there were still obstacles in the way. Sazonov was one of them, and Grey was another. But both Poincaré and Isvolski were determined to succeed, and the chronicle of the two years preceding the War is the story of their victory over all opposition. They were not particular as to means, nor considerate of persons. Every opportunity was seized to revivify the entente and develop it, and the utmost care was taken to replace the European concert by two opposing coalitions.

The story is a long one, and not very edifying. Poincaré seems to have disliked Isvolski personally, and both appear to have distrusted each other. But in political matters they made an ideal team. There was no divergence in their views. And so they were able to coöperate, supporting and assisting each other in the attainment of the "great solution." Together they intrigued against the pacific French ambassador of St. Petersburg, Georges Louis, and Russian funds were put at the disposal of Poincaré and Klotz to enable them to silence the opposition and even to bring about Poincaré's election as president. And where they could not coöperate, they supplemented each other. It was Poincaré's opposition that wrecked the agreement between England and Germany and it was Poincaré who effected the naval arrangement between England and Russia in 1914, after Isvolski had already brought about the Russian-French naval pact in 1912. The greatest obstacle, however, seems to have been Sazonov. Like Isvolski in 1908, he still hoped that Russia could attain her ends in the Near East without fighting. Hence the Balkan League, sponsored by Russia. Neither Poincaré nor Isvolski believed in the efficacy of this method, and the French premier had hurried to St. Petersburg in the summer of 1912 to discuss the question of the Straits with Sazonov. He feared above all that the Balkan League would lead to war and that it would be difficult to drag French public opinion into a conflict for a Balkan issue. But Sazonov was determined to try his luck, and in the end Poincaré went so far as to say that if Russia went to war France would do likewise, on the assumption that a campaign by the Russians in the Balkans would bring in Austria and eventually Germany. Great efforts were made to convince the leaders of French opinion that the problem of the Near East was a question of life and death for the nation, in so far as it disturbed the balance of power in Europe. The indications are that the Balkan conflicts in 1912-1913 would certainly have led to a general conflagration had the little fellows not fallen out among themselves, and had the Bulgarians not forgotten themselves by advancing on Constantinople. It was like a slap in the face for Russia, and even Sazonov began to see the light. Away with diplomatic combinations! He would send a force through the Caucasus and settle the Straits question by pressure on the Turks directly. But unfortunately there was England to consider, and Sazonov himself was compelled to admit that Poincaré and Isvolski were right. In December, 1913, in a famous memorandum to the Tsar, he admitted that Russian ambitions in the Straits could be attained only through a European war. He was converted, and after that it was clear sailing. Delcassé had already replaced Louis at St. Petersburg and the negotiations which he had begun were completed in the spring of 1914. Russia was to receive a huge loan, to be used in the construction of strategic railways in Poland. Russian funds appear to have been used to agitate in behalf of the three year military bill in France. Discussions of an Anglo-Russian naval agreement were hurried along, and the Balkan States that could be relied upon were helped out with loans floated in Paris. By June 1914 the stage was almost set, and almost any pretext would suffice to let loose the storm.

There the story of the documents ends. Significantly enough there is very little of Isvolski's correspondence for July, 1914 extant. As the editor suggests, Isvolski may have taken care of that before it was too late. But at any rate we can imagine what passed. Neither Poincaré nor Isvolski was the man to shrink when the decisive moment came. Both lived to see their efforts result in the catastrophe of July 1914, and both lived to see the victory. Victory indeed, but at what a price!

WILLIAM L. LANGER.

The Human Aspect of Science

Aspects of Science, by J. W. N. Sullivan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

WHY is it that books about science are so uniformly disappointing? One reason is, perhaps, that men who know enough about science to write about it are liable to be impatient with the rest of the world, or condescending toward it, which is no better; while writers humanistic enough to keep their science in perspective just fail of that perfect familiarity with scientific materials which alone commands respect. On one hand scientists have great difficulty in keeping in mind that the world is made of a number of things of which science is only a recent and, considering all things, small part. Of humility they show no lack, but it is always an irrelevant personal humility. By abasing themselves before their shrine they give actually the effect of having lost all sense of proportion where the object of their worship is concerned, of actually not knowing that, to quote Mr. Sullivan:

> science still falls far short of affording complete comprehension or of providing so finished a picture of reality that we feel no need of other speculations. The different sciences do not yet conspire to form one single coherent body of truth. The interstices between them are still sufficiently large to admit foreign interpretations.

Such admissions are not to be expected of scientific writers generally—which is only to say that the publicity men of science are bigots, as all publicity men are liable to be.

But, on the other hand, those writers who deal largely with the universe, putting science in its place as a partial realization of infinite truth, are likely to be more interested in the unknowable and the encroachments science has presumably made on it than in the detailed accomplishments of the laboratory. The portrait which results, to quote Mr. Sullivan again, is a good likeness, but of the painter rather than the subject.

> The well-meant and industrious efforts of professional metaphysicians to explain to men of science in what sense science is true, in what sense it has meaning and in what its value really consists, practically all suffer from the defect that the men of science do not recognize the subject of investigation as being science at all. It is almost true to say that the professional philos-

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> opher is convincing only when he is talking about the Absolute, for that is a subject with which nobody else is concerned; but when he devotes his attention to subjects with which other people are familiar, it often becomes possible to put the book down before finishing it. Thus treatises on æsthetics are usually convincing to everybody but poets, painters and musicians, and philosophical writings on science are probably in great demand amongst classical scholars.

These explanations of the difficulty, however, seem all to rest too heavily on human narrowness of mind. Minds are narrow, but the cosmos is extremely broad. In dealing with such a subject it is not surprising after all that writers experience difficulty. To know science as an insider and to know also the perspective of human culture as the anthropologist, for instance, views it is something of a task. It is very hard to reconcile what we know to be the tremendous driving force of science with the fact that we do not know at all clearly just how and where its most terrific blows are delivered, nor when the knockout has occurred.

> The effect of the impact of science on the old culture cannot be foreseen; it has, however, already produced such changes that the culture of the comparatively near future will probably differ from ours by more than ours differs from that of Babylon.

And yet. . . .

> The influence of scientific discoveries on that vaguely defined complex of beliefs and intellectual interests called culture seems, at first sight, to have something paradoxical about it. There can be no question that this influence is very widespread, and there can be as little that ignorance of scientific discoveries is equally widespread.

Considered as an aspect of human culture science is therefore a very baffling phenomenon.

No higher praise could be given to this little book than is conveyed by saying that it manages to surmount these obstacles, unless it be to say further that it does so with quite extraordinary grace and charm and clarity of style. Mr. Sullivan writes of science as simply as a hostess might speak of her kitchen, recognizing its supreme importance in the domestic economy and yet never forgetting that her guests may not be interested in the details of its organization. His charm, also, is the irresistible light touch of savoir faire. Of his technical mastery there can be no doubt. It is attested by the wealth, accuracy and pertinence of his occasional references to the details of scientific research. We should accept him upon his good looks even if we did not have the credential of his book on atoms and the quantum theory, written between the appearance of the English edition of Aspects of Science and this presentation to the American public. But most of all he makes a conquest of us by his replete humanity. Mr. Sullivan himself describes his point of view "perhaps as æsthetic, but rather better as humanistic." It is impossible not to quote him!

> Scientific ideas have a history; they arose to satisfy certain human needs; to see them in their context is to see them as part of the general intellectual and emotional life of man. What they exist to do they do better than does anything else, and the needs they satisfy are not peculiar to scientific specialists. These papers try to show one or two of the many reasons why, for people who are not specialists as well as for those who are, science may be interesting.

The essays in this book, accordingly, are not chapters in a history of science nor serially numbered "aspects" taking in ultimately all sides of the irregular polyhedron. They are rather such glimpses of the scientific scene as one might get from the rear seat of a very comfortable and sure machine, each æsthetically complete and satisfactory in itself though polished off in three or four or half a dozen pages. He talks of what science is, of what it means in terms of human culture, of what sort of people various scientists have been, of the mental traits that are required for the mastery and prosecution of scientific work (there is a gem on the contributions to astronomy of uninspired plodders!), of the shortcomings of popular science and the suspicious suavity of theologico-scientific apologists, of the new hopes and mysteries that have come to science through those recent discoveries and hypotheses that have pied the fastest laws of Newtonian physics. And at all points it is a book to read on trains, a book from which to copy out quotations, a book to inflict on all your friends.

But most especially Mr. Sullivan has written a book for complacent people.

> Those writers [he says] who declare that there is no "real" conflict between science and religion, for instance, may be perfectly good logicians; the point is, whether a particular religion looks adequate in the modern universe of science. It is not a question of destroying the furniture: it is a question whether the contents of a bijou villa adequately furnish Salisbury Plain. The influence of science on philosophy is similarly indirect. Perhaps there is no philosophy which does not still find defenders; our objection to many of these philosophies is not that they are illogical, but that they look so funny.

Someone should make a special offer of Aspects of Science: free copies to Defenders of the Faith!

C. E. Ayres.

Contributors

T. K. Whipple is associate professor of English in the University of California. He contributes frequently to the Literary Review and to the Saturday Review. Recently the New Republic published an essay on Eugene O'Neill which was part of a forthcoming book of Mr. Whipple's on Contemporary American Literature.

Edmund Wilson, author, editor and critic, had a play, The Crime in the Whistler Room, produced by the Provincetown Players last year. In collaboration with John Peale Bishop he wrote The Undertaker's Garland.

Lewis Mumford writes art and literary criticisms for the New Republic and other magazines. He is the author of The Story of Utopia, and Sticks and Stones: An Interpretation of American Architecture and Civilization, which Boni and Liveright published last fall.

Mary Ellis Oppycke, formerly assistant music critic on the staff of the New York Sun, contributes reviews and other articles to magazines.

William L. Langer is assistant professor of European history at Clark University. He is bibliographical editor of Foreign Affairs and a student of diplomatic history.

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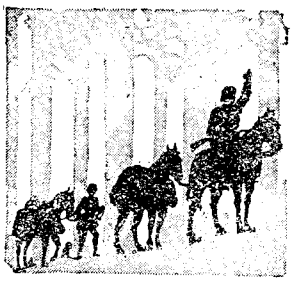

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